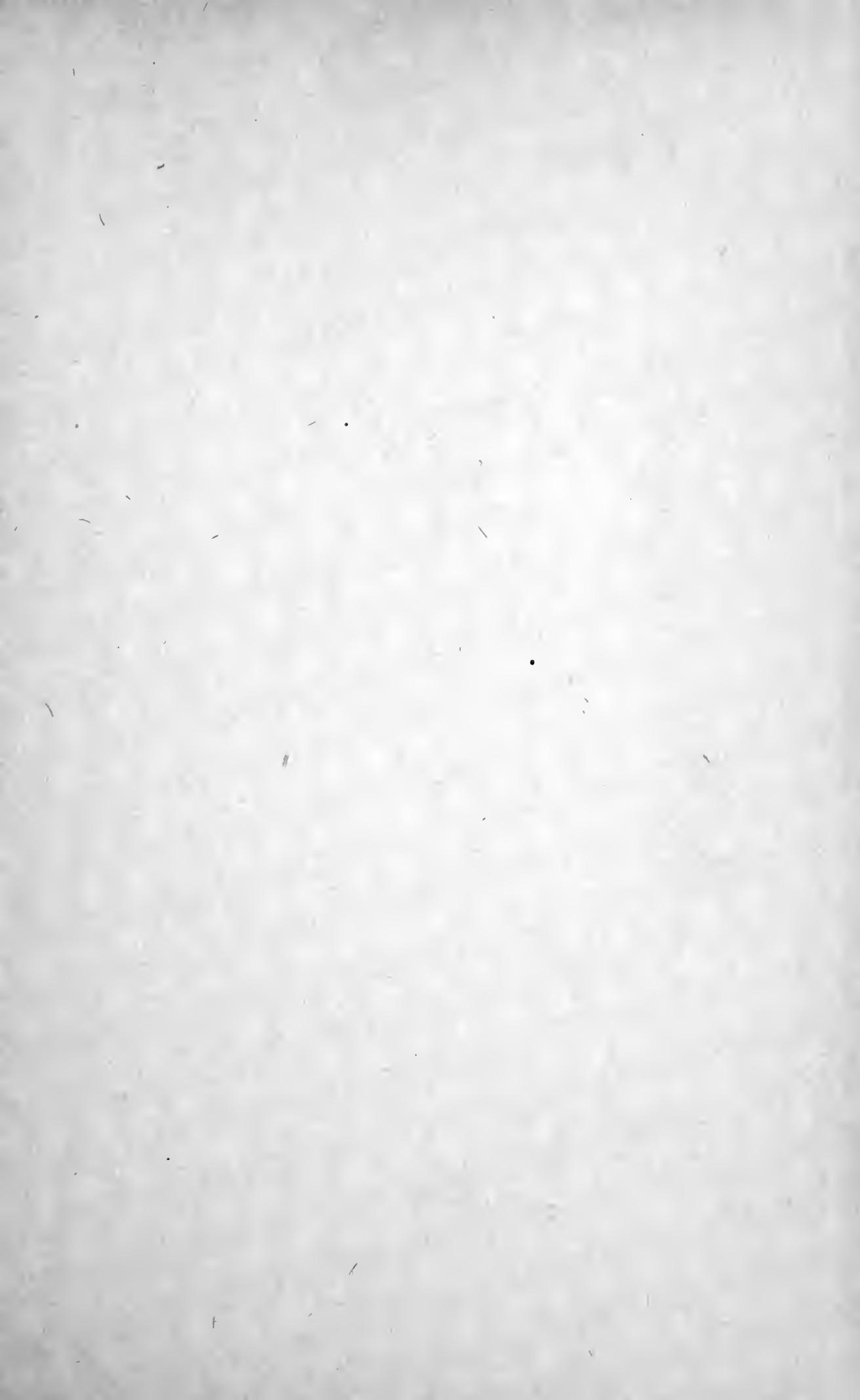
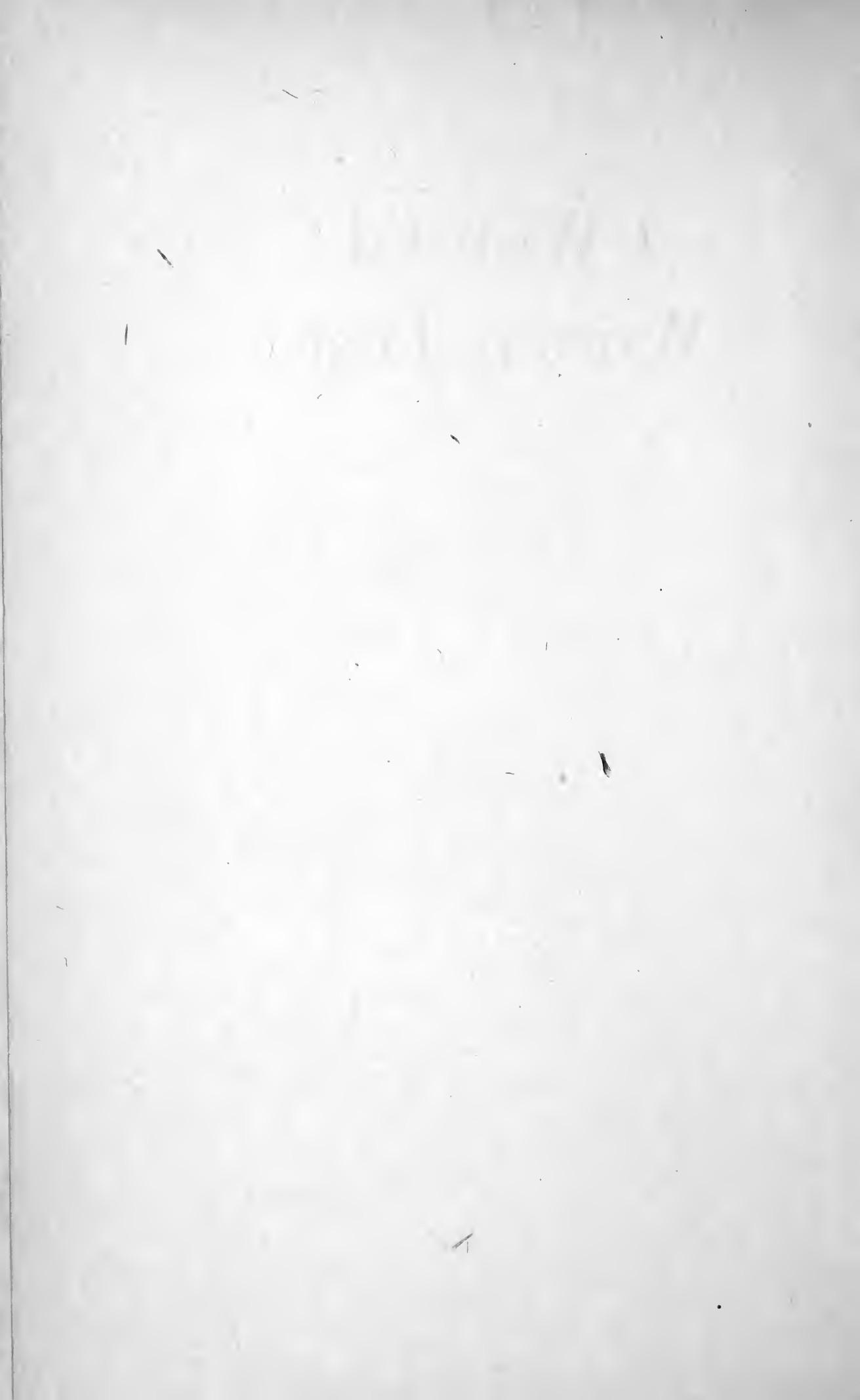


I WISH I'D WRITTEN THAT

UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA
LIBRARIES







I Wish I'd Written That

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

<http://www.archive.org/details/iwishidwrittenth00wood>

I Wish I'd Written That

SELECTIONS CHOSEN BY
FAVORITE AMERICAN AUTHORS

Edited by
EUGENE J. WOODS

Whittlesey House
McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.
New York: London

I WISH I'D WRITTEN THAT

COPYRIGHT, 1946, BY

EUGENE WOODS

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*All rights reserved. This book, or
parts thereof, may not be reproduced
in any form without permission of
the publishers.*



Contents

CO-EDITOR	SELECTION	AUTHOR	PAGE
FOREWORD			vii
S. J. Perelman	KATIE WINS A HOME	<i>Ring Lardner</i>	1
Ogden Nash	THE FOX OF PEAPACK	<i>E. B. White</i>	24
Christopher Morley	THE END OF THE VOYAGE	<i>Joseph Conrad</i>	28
Conrad Aiken	AN ANTHEM OF EARTH	<i>Francis Thompson</i>	39
Marquis James	A BOY COMES TO BOSTON	<i>Esther Forbes</i>	51
Kenneth Roberts	FENIMORE COOPER'S LITERARY OFFENSES	<i>Mark Twain</i>	60
Morley Callaghan	I WANT TO KNOW WHY	<i>Sherwood Anderson</i>	74
Dorothy Canfield Fisher	LA VIRGINIE	<i>Alex Comfort</i>	85
Louis Bromfield	THE DAY THE DAM BROKE	<i>James Thurber</i>	97
Margaret Fishback	NATURA IN URBE	<i>E. B. White</i>	104
Esther Forbes	A DAY OF PEACE	<i>Leo Tolstoy</i>	106
Willa Cather	THE MARY GLOSTER	<i>Rudyard Kipling</i>	129
Robert Nathan	GLAMOUR	<i>Stephen Vincent Benét</i>	136
Allan Nevins	FREE JOE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD	<i>Joel Chandler Harris</i>	154
James Thurber	FAREWELL, MY LOVELY!	<i>Lee Strout White</i>	168
Henry Seidel Canby	WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR	<i>Henry D. Thoreau</i>	177
Clare Boothe Luce	THE HOUND OF HEAVEN	<i>Francis Thompson</i>	193
William Saroyan	THE POOKA AND THE GOOD FAIRY	<i>Flann O'Brien</i>	199
Upton Sinclair	PASSAGES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE	<i>John Ruskin and Isaiah</i>	211
Wilbur Daniel Steele	THE RETURN	<i>Sherwood Anderson</i>	214
William McFee	McANDREW'S HYMN	<i>Rudyard Kipling</i>	232

Contents

CO-EDITOR	SELECTION	AUTHOR	PAGE
Irwin Edman	NORMAL MADNESS	<i>George Santayana</i>	239
Richard Wright	EARLY DAYS OF A WOMAN	<i>Gertrude Stein</i>	254
Will Cuppy	A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS	<i>Robert Benchley</i>	270
Wolcott Gibbs	OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOOD	<i>John O'Hara</i>	278
H. Allen Smith	JOURNALISM IN TENNESSEE	<i>Mark Twain</i>	286
Jesse Stuart	THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT	<i>Robert Burns</i>	293
Kay Boyle	THE BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFÉ	<i>Carson McCullers</i>	300
Samuel Hoffenstein	I PAINT WHAT I SEE	<i>E. B. White</i>	365
John Dos Passos	PICTURE OF A PARTY	<i>F. Scott Fitzgerald</i>	368
Westbrook Pegler	ONE IS A WANDERER	<i>James Thurber</i>	381
H. I. Phillips	BUTCH MINDS THE BABY	<i>Damon Runyon</i>	389
Irving Stone	THE CAMPAIGN OF 1856	<i>Allan Nevins</i>	403
INDEX			421

Foreword

IT is not my purpose to say anything here about the various selections in this volume. Each contribution, in itself and together with its sponsorship and the indicative comments of the particular co-editor, contains all the eloquence possible. However, I believe the reader is entitled to an explanation of the book's intent.

This collection of thirty-three contributions represents what my distinguished co-editors each wishes he had written. It is based on the assumption that these conscientious co-editors, each an outstanding American writer in his own literary department, in choosing what they wished they had written, could not fail to bring together a collection of exceptional reading.

That assumption is the natural outgrowth of the personal and universal experience of finding satisfaction in the sincere recommendations one favored writer makes for the work of another writer. The mere designation of a particular selection as the work the co-editor wishes he had written is recommendation moved to a higher plane.

Consideration was given to the fact that a writer in a specific field has a vast and intimate knowledge of the literature of that field, which, combined with his habitual high critical standard as a recognized craftsman, gives a large measure of validity to his selection.

Still another important premise was the realization that such a colloquial and personal question as "What do you wish you had written?" would elicit spontaneous and genuine answers with resultant benefits in the quality of the material assembled.

With inclusion on merit the sole yardstick, the selections have been assembled. The assumption has been vindicated for me by my co-editors beyond my fondest hopes. It will be vindicated again and

Foreword

again for every reader who shares with me the satisfaction that these pages hold.

I want to acknowledge properly the all-important part my co-editors have so generously played in this work. Each has considered carefully the question put to him and, after the mental struggle such an innocuous-looking question demands, has sent me a positive answer. Nor did they stop there. To simple cooperation they added enthusiasm, assistance and interest. I am most grateful to them for the skilled and valued assistance they have given me.

In the following pages, the order of the contributions is strictly an arbitrary one. Certainly, there is no rating of the material to be read into this arrangement. I suggest that each reader choose his own order of reading, dictated by mood or purpose.

And what do I wish?—I wish I could have selected these contributions.

EUGENE J. WOODS

Manhasset, N. Y.

April, 1946

I Wish I'd Written That



S. J. PERELMAN:

"I wish I had written

Katie Wins a Home

by RING LARDNER"

Mr. Perelman, a humorist who is equally at home in the theatre or on the printed page, has been a frequent contributor to our national mirth. His record lists in part, DAWN GINSBERGH'S REVENGE, CRAZY LIKE A FOX, sketches for shows, magazine pieces and the movies. How much he appreciates the best in humor is apparent in this selection of which he says: "The play called 'Bridget Sees a Ghost,' in the following short story by Ring Lardner, is, for my taste, as fine a bit of descriptive humor as anything I recall in the twenty-five years since its publication. Its satire is particularly apt because you might just as easily have seen this drama on Broadway last night. Lardner's skill at mingling goose-flesh and laughter was unmatched. Any comic writer of our time would give his left margin release to have written this story, and you know who I mean."

O H yes, we been back here quite a wile. And we're liable to be here quite a wile. This town's good enough for me and it suits the Mrs. too, though they didn't neither one of us appreciate it till we'd give New York a try. If I was running the South Bend Boosters' club, I'd make everybody spend a year on the Gay White Way. They'd be so tickled when they got to South Bend that you'd never hear them razz the old burg again. Just yesterday we had a letter from Katie, asking us would we come and pay her a visit. She's a regular New Yorker now. Well, I didn't have to put up no fight with my Mrs. Before I could open my pan she says, "I'll write and tell her we can't come; that you're looking for a job and don't want to go nowheres just now."

From THE BIG TOWN. Copyright, 1921, 1925, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

S. J. Perelman

Well, they's some truth in that. I don't want to go nowheres and I'll take a job if it's the right kind. We could get along on the interest from Ella's money, but I'm tired of laying round. I didn't do a tap of work all the time I was east and I'm out of the habit, but the days certainly do drag when a man ain't got nothing to do and if I can find something where I don't have to travel, I'll try it out.

But the Mrs. has still got most of what the old man left her and all and all, I'm glad we made the trip. I more than broke even by winning pretty close to \$10,000 on the ponies down there. And we got Katie off our hands, which was one of the objects of us going in the first place—that and because the two gals wanted to see Life. So I don't grudge the time we spent, and we had some funny experiences when you look back at them. Anybody does that goes on a tour like that with a cuckoo like Katie. You hear a lot of songs and gags about mother-in-laws. But I could write a book of them about sister-in-laws that's twenty years old and pretty and full of peace and good will towards Men.

Well, after the blow-off with Daley, Long Island got too slow, besides costing us more than we could afford. So the gals suggested moving back in Town, to a hotel called the Graham on Sixty-seventh Street that somebody had told them was reasonable.

They called it a family hotel, but as far as I could see, Ella and I was the only ones there that had ever forced two dollars on the clergy. Outside of the transients, they was two song writers and a couple of gals that had their hair pruned and wrote for the papers, and the rest of the lodgers was boys that had got penned into a sixteen-foot ring with Benny Leonard by mistake. They looked like they'd spent many an evening hanging onto the ropes during the rush hour.

When we'd staid there two days, Ella and Katie was ready to pack up again.

"This is just a joint," said Ella. "The gals may be all right, but they're never in, only to sleep. And the men's impossible; a bunch of low prize-fighters."

I was for sticking, on account of the place being cheap, so I said: "Second prize ain't so low. And you're overlooking the two hand-

Katie Wins a Home

some tune thieves. Besides, what's the difference who else lives here as long as the rooms is clean and they got a good restaurant? What did our dude cellmates out on Long Island get us? Just trouble!"

But I'd of lose the argument as usual only for Kate oversleeping herself. It was our third morning at the Graham and her and Ella had it planned to go and look for a better place. But Katie didn't get up till pretty near noon and Ella went without her. So it broke so's Sis had just came downstairs and turned in her key when the two bellhops reeled in the front door bulging with baggage and escorting Mr. Jimmy Ralston. Yes, Jimmy Ralston the comedian. Or comic, as he calls it.

Well, he ain't F. X. Bushman, as you know. But no one that seen him could make the mistake of thinking he wasn't somebody. And he looked good enough to Kate so she waited till the clerk had him fixed up, and then ast who he was. The clerk told her and she told us when the Mrs. come back from her hunt. Ella begin to name a few joints where we might move, but it seemed like Sis had changed her mind.

"Oh," she says, "let's stay here a wile longer, a week anyway."

"What's came over you!" ast Ella. "You just said last night that you was bored to death here."

"Maybe we won't be so bored now," said Kate, smiling. "The Graham's looking up. We're entertaining a celebrity—Jimmy Ralston of the Follies."

Well, they hadn't none of us ever seen him on the stage, but of course we'd heard of him. He'd only just started with the Follies, but he'd made a name for himself at the Winter Garden, where he broke in two or three years ago. And Kate said that a chorus gal she'd met—Jane Abbott—had told her about Ralston and what a scream he was on a party.

"He's terribly funny when he gets just the right number of drinks," says Kate.

"Well, let's stay then," says Ella. "It'll be exciting to know a real actor."

"I would like to know him," says Katie, "not just because he's on

S. J. Perelman

the stage, but I think it'd be fun to set and listen to him talk. He must say the screamingest things! If we had him round we wouldn't have to play cards or nothing for entertainment. Only they say it makes people fat to laugh."

"If I was you, I'd want to get fat," I said. "Looking like *E* string hasn't started no landslide your way."

"Is he attractive?" ast the Mrs.

"Well," said Kate, "he isn't handsome, but he's striking looking. You wouldn't never think he was a comedian. But then, ain't it generally always true the driest people have sad faces?"

"That's a joke!" I said. "Did you ever see Bryan when he didn't look like somebody was tickling his feet?"

"We'll have to think up some scheme to get introduced to him," says Ella.

"It'll be tough," I says. "I don't suppose they's anybody in the world harder to meet than a member of the Follies, unless it's an Elk in a Pullman washroom."

"But listen," says Kate: "We don't want to meet him till we've saw the show. It'd be awfully embarrassing to have him ask us how we liked the Follies and we'd have to say we hadn't been to it."

"Yes," said the Mrs., "but still if we tell him we haven't been to it, he may give us free passes."

"Easy!" I said. "And it'd take a big load off his mind. They say it worries the Follies people half sick wondering what to do with all their free passes."

"Suppose we go to-night!" says Kate. "We can drop in a hotel somewhere and get seats. The longer we don't go, the longer we won't meet him."

"And the longer we don't meet him," I says, "the longer till he gives you the air."

"I'm not thinking of Mr. Ralston as a possible suitor," says Katie, swelling up. "But I do want to get acquainted with a man that don't bore a person to death."

"Well," I says, "if this baby's anything like the rest of your gentleman friends, he won't hardly be round long enough for that."

Katie Wins a Home

I didn't make no kick about going to the show. We hadn't spent no money since we'd moved back to Town and I was as tired as the gals of setting up in the room, playing rummy. They said we'd have to dress, and I kicked just from habit, but I'd got past minding that end of it. They was one advantage in dolling up every time you went anywhere. It meant an hour when they was no chance to do something even sillier.

We couldn't stop to put on the nose bag at the Graham because the women was scared we'd be too late to get tickets. Besides, when you're dressed for dinner, you at least want the waiter to be the same. So we took a taxi down to the Spencer, bought Follies seats in the ninth row, and went in to eat. It's been in all the papers that the price of food has came down, but the hotel man can't read. They fined us eleven smackers for a two-course banquet that if the Woman's Guild, here, would dast soak you four bits a plate for it, somebody'd write a nasty letter to the *News-Times*.

We got in the theater a half hour before the show begin. I put in the time finding out what the men will wear, and the gals looked up what scenes Ralston'd be in. He was only on once in each act. They don't waste much time on a comedian in the Follies. It don't take long to spring the two gags they can think up for him in a year, and besides, he just interferes with the big gal numbers, where Bunny Granville or somebody dreams of the different flappers he danced with at the prom, and the souvenirs they give him; and one by one the different gals writhes in, dressed like the stage director thinks they dress at the female colleges—a Wesley gal in pink tights, a Vassar dame in a hula-hula, and a Smith gal with a sombrero and a sailor suit. He does a couple of steps with them and they each hand him a flower or a vegetable to remember them by. The song winds up:

But my most exclusive token
Is a little hangnail broken
Off the gal from Gussie's School for Manicures.

And his real sweet patootie comes on made up as a scissors.
You've saw Ralston? He's a good comedian; no getting away

S. J. Perelman

from that. The way he fixes up his face, you laugh just to look at him. I yelled when I first seen him. He was supposed to be an office boy and he got back late from lunch and the boss ast him what made him late and he said he stopped to buy the extra. So the boss ast him what extra and he says the extra about the New York society couple getting married. So the boss said, "Why, they wouldn't print an extra about that. They's a New York society couple married most every day." So Ralston said, "Yes, but this couple is both doing it for the first time."

I don't remember what other gags he had, and they're old anyway by now. But he was a hit, especially with Ella and Kate. They screamed so loud I thought we'd get the air. If he didn't say a word, he'd be funny with that fool make-up and that voice.

I guess if it wasn't for me the gals would of insisted on going back to the stage door after the show and waiting for him to come out. I've saw Katie bad a lot of times, but never as cuckoo as this. It wasn't no case of love at first or second sight. You couldn't be stuck on this guy from seeing him. But she'd always been kind of stage-struck and was crazy over the idear of getting acquainted with a celebrity, maybe going round to places with him, and having people see her with Jimmy Ralston, the comedian. And then, of course, most anybody wants to meet a person that can make you laugh.

I managed to persuade them that the best dope would be to go back to the Graham and wait for him to come home; maybe we could fix it up with the night clerk to introduce us. I told them that irregardless of what you read in books, they's some members of the theatrical profession that occasionally visits the place where they sleep. So we went to the hotel and set in the lobby for an hour and a half, me trying to keep awake wile the gals played Ralston's part of the show over again a couple thousand times. They's nothing goes so big with me as listening to people repeat gags out of a show that I just seen.

The clerk had been tipped off and when Ralston finally come in and went to get his key, I strolled up to the desk like I was after mine. The clerk introduced us.

Katie Wins a Home

"I want you to meet my wife and sister-in-law," I said.

"Some other time," says Ralston. "They's a matinée to-morrow and I got to run off to bed."

So off he went and I got bawled out for Ziegfeld having matinées. But I squared myself two days afterwards when we went in the restaurant for lunch. He was just having breakfast and the three of us stopped by his table. I don't think he remembered ever seeing me before, but anyway he got up and shook hands with the women. Well, you couldn't never accuse Ella of having a faint heart, and she says:

"Can't we set down with you, Mr. Ralston? We want to tell you how much we enjoyed the Follies."

So he says, sure, set down, but I guess we would of anyway.

"We thought it was a dandy show," says Katie.

"It ain't a bad troupe," says Ralston.

"If you'll pardon me getting personal," said Ella, "we thought you was the best thing in it."

He looked like he'd strain a point and forgive her.

"We all just yelled!" says Katie. "I was afraid they'd put us out, you made us laugh so hard."

"Well," says Ralston, "I guess if they begin putting people out for that, I'd have to leave the troupe."

"It wouldn't be much of a show without you," says Ella.

"Well, all that keeps me in it is friendship for Ziggy," says Ralston. "I said to him last night, I says, 'Ziggy, I'm going to quit the troupe. I'm tired and I want to rest a wile.' So he says, 'Jim, don't quit or I'll have to close the troupe. I'll give you fifteen hundred a week to stay.' I'm getting a thousand now. But I says to him, I said, 'Ziggy, it ain't a question of money. What I want is a troupe of my own, where I get a chance to do serious work. I'm sick of making a monkey of myself in front of a bunch of saps from Nyack that don't appreciate no art but what's wrapped up in a stocking.' So he's promised that if I'll stick it out this year, he'll star me next season in a serious piece."

"Is he giving you the five hundred raise?" I ast him.

"I wouldn't take it," said Ralston. "I don't need money."

S. J. Perelman

"At that, a person can live pretty cheap at this hotel," I says.

"I didn't move here because it was cheap," he said. "I moved here to get away from the pests—women that wants my autograph or my picture. And all they could say how much they enjoyed my work and how did I think up all them gags, and so forth. No real artist likes to talk about himself, especially to people that don't understand. So that's the reason why I left the Ritz, so's I'd be left alone, not to save money. And I don't save no money, neither. I've got the best suite in the house—bedroom, bath and study."

"What do you study?" ast Kate.

"The parts I want to play," he says; "Hamlet and Macbeth and Richard."

"But you're a comedian," says Kate.

"It's just a stepping stone," said Ralston.

He'd finished his breakfast and got up.

"I must go to my study and work," he says. "We'll meet again."

"Yes, indeed," says Ella. "Do you always come right back here nights after the show?"

"When I can get away from the pests," he says.

"Well," says Ella, "suppose you come up to our rooms tonight and we'll have a bite to eat. And I think the husband can give you a little liquid refreshments if you ever indulge."

"Very little," he says. "What is your room number?"

So the Mrs. told him and he said he'd see us after the show that night, and walked out.

"Well," said Ella, "how do you like him?"

"I think he's wonderful!" says Katie. "I didn't have no idear he was so deep, wanting to play Hamlet."

"Pretty near all comedians has got that bug," I says.

"Maybe he's different when you know him better," said Ella.

"I don't want him to be different," says Kate.

"But he was so serious," said the Mrs. "He didn't say nothing funny."

"Sure he did," I says. "Didn't he say artists hate to talk about themselves?"

Katie Wins a Home

Pretty soon the waiter come in with our lunch. He ast us if the other gentleman was coming back.

"No," said Ella. "He's through."

"He forgot his check," says the dish smasher.

"Oh, never mind!" says Ella. "We'll take care of that."

"Well," I says, "I guess the bird was telling the truth when he said he didn't need no money."

I and the gals spent the evening at a picture show and stopped at a delicatessen on the way home to stock up for the banquet. I had a quart and a pint of yearling rye, and a couple of bottles of McAllister that they'd fined me fifteen smackers apiece for and I wanted to save them, so I told Kate that I hoped her friend would get comical enough on the rye.

"He said he drunk very little," she reminded me.

"Remember, don't make him talk about himself," said the Mrs. "What we want is to have him feel at home, like he was with old friends, and then maybe he'll warm up. I hope we don't wake the whole hotel, laughing."

Well, Ralston showed about midnight. He'd remembered his date and apologized for not getting there before.

"I like to walk home from the theater," he says. "I get some of my funniest idears wile I walk."

I come to the conclusion later that he spent practically his whole life riding.

Ella's and my room wasn't no gymnasium for size and after the third drink, Ralston tried to get to the dresser to look at himself in the glass, and knocked a \$30 vase for a corpse. This didn't go very big with the Mrs., but she forced a smile and would of accepted his apology if he'd made any. All he done was mumble something about cramped quarters. They was even more cramped when we set the table for the big feed, and it was my tough luck to have our guest park himself in the chair nearest the clothes closet, where my two bottles of Scotch had been put to bed. The fourth snifter finished the pint of rye and I said I'd get the other quart but before I could stop her, Ella says:

S. J. Perelman

“Let Mr. Ralston get it. It’s right there by him.”

So the next thing you know, James has found the good stuff and he comes out with both bottles of it.

“McAllister!” he says. “That’s my favorite. If I’d knew you had that, I wouldn’t of drank up all your rye.”

“You haven’t drank it all up,” I says. “They’s another bottle of it in there.”

“It can stay there as long as we got this,” he says, and helped himself to the corkscrew.

Well, amongst the knickknacks the gals had picked up at the delicatessen was a roast chicken and a bottle of olives, and at the time I thought Ralston was swallowing bones, stones and all. It wasn’t till the next day that we found all these keepsakes on the floor, along with a couple of dozen assorted cigarette butts.

Katie’s chorus gal friend had told her how funny the guy was when he’d had just the right number of shots, but I’d counted eight and begin to get discouraged before he started talking.

“My mother could certainly cook a chicken,” he says.

“Is your mother living?” Kate ast him.

“No,” he says. “She was killed in a railroad wreck. I’ll never forget when I had to go and identify her. You wouldn’t believe a person could get that mangled! No,” he says, “my family’s all gone. I never seen my father. He was in the pesthouse with small-pox when I was born and he died there. And my only sister died of jaundice. I can still—”

But Kate was scared we’d wake up the hotel, laughing, so she says: “Do you ever give imitations?”

“You mustn’t make Mr. Ralston talk about himself,” says Ella.

“Imitations of who?” said Ralston.

“Oh, other actors,” said Katie.

“No,” he says. “I leave it to the other actors to give imitations of me.”

“I never seen none of them do it,” says Kate.

“They all do it, but they don’t advertise it,” he says. “Every comic in New York is using my stuff.”

Katie Wins a Home

"Oh!" said Ella. "You mean they steal your idears."

"Can't you go after them for it?" ast Katie.

"You could charge them with petit larceny," I said.

"I wouldn't be mean," said Ralston. "But they ain't a comic on the stage to-day that I didn't give him every laugh he's got."

"You ain't only been on the stage three or four years," I says. "How did Hitchcock and Ed Wynn and them fellas get by before they seen you?"

"They wasn't getting by," he says. "I'm the baby that put them on their feet. Take Hitchy. Hitchy come to me last spring and says, 'Jim, I've ran out of stuff. Have you got any notions I could use?' So I says, 'Hitchy, you're welcome to anything I got.' So I give him a couple of idears and they're the only laughs in his troupe. And you take Wynn. He opened up with a troupe that looked like a flop and one day I seen him on Broadway, wearing a long pan, and I says, 'What's the matter, Eddie?' And he brightened up and says, "Hello, there, Jim! You're just the boy I want to see.' So I says, 'Well, Eddie, I'm only too glad to do anything I can.' So he says, 'I got a flop on my hands unlest I can get a couple of idears, and you're the baby that can give them to me.' So I said, 'All right, Eddie.' And I give him a couple of notions to work on and they made his show. And look at Stone! And Errol! And Jolson and Tinney! Every one of them come to me at one time another, hollering for help. 'Jim, give me a couple of notions!' 'Jim, give me a couple of gags!' And not one of them went away empty-handed."

"Did they pay you?" ast Ella.

Ralston smiled.

"I wouldn't take no actor's money," he says. "They're all brothers to me. They can have anything I got, and I can have anything they got, only they haven't got nothing."

Well, I can't tell you all he said, as I was asleep part of the time. But I do remember that he was the one that had give Bert Williams the notion of playing coon parts, and learnt Sarah Bernhardt to talk French.

Along about four o'clock, when they was less than a pint left in

S. J. Perelman

the second McAllister bottle, he defied all the theater managers in New York.

"I ain't going to monkey with them much longer!" he says. "I'll let you folks in on something that'll cause a sensation on Broadway. I'm going to quit the Follies!"

We was all speechless.

"That's the big secret!" he says. "I'm coming out as a star under my own management and in a troupe wrote and produced by myself!"

"When?" ast Kate.

"Just as soon as I decide who I'm going to let in as part owner," said Ralston. "I've worked for other guys long enough! Why should I be satisfied with \$800 a week when Ziegfeld's getting rich off me?"

"When did he cut you \$200?" I says. "You was getting \$1,000 last time I seen you."

He didn't pay no attention.

"And why should I let some manager produce my play," he says, "and pay me maybe \$1,200 a week when I ought to be making six or seven thousand!"

"Are you working on your play now?" Kate ast him.

"It's done," he says. "I'm just trying to make up my mind who's the right party to let in on it. Whoever it is, I'll make him rich."

"I've got some money to invest," says Katie. "Suppose you tell us about the play."

"I'll give you the notion, if you'll keep it to yourself," says Ralston. "It's a serious play with a novelty idear that'll be a sensation. Suppose I go down to my suite and get the script and read it to you."

"Oh, if you would!" says Kate.

"It'll knock you dead!" he says.

And just the thought of it was fatal to the author. He got up from his chair, done a nose dive across the table and laid there with his head in the chili sauce.

I called up the clerk and had him send up the night bellhop with our guest's key. I and the boy acted as pall bearers and got him to his "suite," where we performed the last sad rites. Before I come

Katie Wins a Home

away I noticed that the "suite" was a ringer for Ella's and mine—a dinky little room with a bath. The "study" was prettily furnished with coat hangers.

When I got back to my room Katie'd ducked and the Mrs. was asleep, so I didn't get a chance to talk to them till we was in the restaurant at noon. Then I ast Kate if she'd figured out just what number drink it was that had started him being comical.

"Now listen," she says: "I don't think that Abbott girl ever met him in her life. Anyway, she had him all wrong. We expected he'd do stunts, like she said, but he ain't that kind that shows off or acts smart. He's too much of a man for that. He's a bigger man than I thought."

"I and the bellhop remarked that same thing," I says.

"And you needn't make fun of him for getting faint," says Katie. "I called him up a wile ago to find out how he was and he apologized and said they must of been something in that second bottle of Scotch."

So I says:

"You tell him they was, but they ain't."

Well, it couldn't of been the Scotch or no other brew that ruined me. Or if it was, it worked mighty slow. I didn't even look at a drink for three days after the party in our room. But the third day I felt rotten, and that night I come down with a fever. Ella got scared and called a doctor and he said it was flu, and if I didn't watch my step it'd be something worse. He advised taking me to a hospital and I didn't have pep enough to say no.

So they took me and I was pretty sick for a couple of weeks—too sick for the Mrs. to give me the news. And it's a wonder I didn't have a relapse when she finally did.

"You'll probably yelp when you hear this," she says. "I ain't crazy about it myself, but it didn't do me no good to argue at first and it's too late for argument now. Well, to begin with, Sis is in love with Ralston."

"What of it!" I said. "She's going through the city directory and she's just got to the *R*'s."

S. J. Perelman

"No, it's the real thing this time," said the Mrs. "Wait till you hear the rest of it. She's going on the stage."

"I've got nothing against that," I says. "She's pretty enough to get by in the Follies chorus, and if she can earn money that way, I'm for it."

"She ain't going into no chorus," said Ella. "Ralston's quit the Follies and she's going in his show."

"The one he wrote?" I ast.

"Yes," said the Mrs.

"And who's going to put it on?" I ast her.

"That's it," she says. "They're going to put it on themselfs. Ralston and Sis. With Sis's money. She sold her bonds, fifty thousand dollars' worth."

"But listen," I says. "Fifty thousand dollars! What's the name of the play, Ringling's Circus?"

"It won't cost all that," said Ella. "They figure it'll take less than ten thousand to get started. But she insisted on having the whole thing in a checking account, where she can get at it. If the show's a big success in New York they're going to have a company in Chicago and another on the road. And Ralston says her half of the profits in New York ought to run round \$5,000 a week. But anyway, she's sure of \$200 a week salary for acting in it."

"Where did she get the idear she can act?" I says.

"She's always had it," said the Mrs., "and I think she made him promise to put her in the show before she agreed to back it. Though she says it's a wonderful investment! She won't be the leading woman, of course. But they's only two woman's parts and she's got one of them."

"Well," I said, "if she's going to play a sap and just acts normal, she'll be a sensation."

"I don't know what she'll be," says Ella. "All I know is that she's mad over Ralston and believes everything he says. And even if you hadn't of been sick we couldn't of stopped her."

So I ast what the play was like, but Ella couldn't tell me.

Ralston had read it out loud to she and Kate, but she couldn't

Katie Wins a Home

judge from just hearing it that way. But Kate was tickled to death with it. And they'd already been rehearsing a week, but Sis hadn't let Ella see the rehearsals. She said it made her nervous.

"Ralston thinks the main trouble will be finding a theater," said the Mrs. "He says they's a shortage of them and the men that owns them won't want to let him have one on account of jealousy."

"Has the Follies flopped?" I ast her.

"No," she says, "but they've left town."

"They always do, this time of year," I said.

"That's what I thought," says the Mrs., "but Ralston says they'd intended to stay here all the year round, but when the news come out that he'd left, they didn't dast. He's certainly got faith in himself. He must have, to give up a \$600 a week salary. That's what he says he was really getting."

"You say Katie's in love," I says. "How about him?"

"I don't know and she don't know," says Ella. "He calls her dearie and everything and holds her hands, but when they're alone together, he won't talk nothing but business. Still, as I say, he calls her dearie."

"Actors calls every gal that," I says. "It's because they can't remember names."

Well, to make a short story out of it, they had another couple weeks' rehearsals that we wasn't allowed to see, and they finally got a theater—the Olney. They had to guarantee a \$10,000 business to get it. They didn't go to Atlantic City or nowheres for a tryout. They opened cold. And Ralston didn't tell nobody what kind of a show it was.

Of course he done what they generally always do on a first night. He sent out free passes to everybody that's got a dress suit, and they's enough of them in New York to pretty near fill up a theater. These invited guests is supposed to be for the performance wile it's going on. After it's through, they can go out and ride it all over the island.

Well, the rules wasn't exactly lived up to at "Bridget Sees a Ghost." On account of Ralston writing the play and starring in it,

S. J. Perelman.

the gang thought it would be comical and they come prepared to laugh. It was comical all right, and they laughed. They didn't only laugh; they yelled. But they yelled in the wrong place.

The programme said it was "a Daring Drama in Three Acts." The three acts was what made it daring. It took nerve to even have one. In the first place, this was two years after the armistice and the play was about the war, and I don't know which the public was most interested in by this time—the war or Judge Parker.

Act 1 was in July, 1917. Ralston played the part of Francis Shaw, a captain in the American army. He's been married a year, and when the curtain goes up, his wife's in their New York home, waiting for him to come in from camp on his weekly leave. She sets reading the war news in the evening paper, and she reads it out loud, like people always do when they're alone, waiting for somebody. Pretty soon in comes Bridget, the Irish maid—our own dear Katie. And I wished you could of heard her brogue. And seen her gestures. What she reminded me most like was a gal in a home talent minstrels giving an imitation of Lew Fields playing the part of the block system on the New York Central. Her first line was, "Ain't der captain home yed?" But I won't try and give you her dialect.

"No," says Mrs. Shaw. "He's late." So Katie says better late than never, and the wife says, yes, but she's got a feeling that some day it'll be never: something tells her that if he ever goes to France he won't come back. So Bridget says, "You been reading the war news again and it always make you sad." "I hate wars!" says Mrs. Shaw, and that line got one of the biggest laughs.

After this they was a couple of minutes when neither of them could think of nothing to add, and then the phone rung and Bridget answered it. It was Capt. Shaw, saying he'd be there pretty soon; so Bridget goes right back to the kitchen to finish getting dinner, but she ain't no sooner than left the stage when Capt. Shaw struts in. He must of called up from the public booth on his front porch.

The audience had a tough time recognizing him without his comic make-up, but when they did they give him a good hand. Mrs. Shaw got up to greet him, but he brushed by her and come down to the

Katie Wins a Home

footlights to bow. Then he turned and went back to his Mrs., saying "Maizie!" like this was the last place he expected to run across her. They kissed and then he ast her, "Where is Bobbie, our dear little one?"—for fear she wouldn't know whose little one he meant. So she rung a bell and back come Bridget, and he says, "Well, Bridget!" and Bridget says, "Well, it's the master!" This line was another riot. "Bring the little one, Bridget," says Mrs. Shaw, and the audience hollered again.

Wile Bridget was after the little one, the captain celebrated the reunion by walking round the room, looking at the pictures. Bridget brings the baby in and the captain uncovers its face and says, "Well, Bobbie!" Then he turns to his wife and says, "Let's see, Maizie. How old is he?" "Two weeks," says Maizie. "Two weeks!" says Captain Shaw, surprised. "Well," he says, "I hope by the time he's old enough to fight for the Stars and Stripes, they won't be no such a thing as war." So Mrs. Shaw says, "And I hope his father won't be called on to make the supreme sacrifice for him and we others that must stay home and wait. I sometimes think that in wartime, it's the women and children that suffers most. Take him back to his cozy cradle, Bridget. We mothers must be careful of our little ones. Who knows when the kiddies will be our only comfort!" So Bridget beat it out with the little one and I bet he hated to leave all the gayety.

"Well," says Shaw to his wife, "and what's the little woman been doing?"

"Just reading," she says, "reading the news of this horrible war. I don't never pick up the paper but what I think that some day I'll see your name amongst the dead."

"Well," says the captain bravely, "they's no danger wile I stay on U.S. soil. But only for you and the little one, I would welcome the call to go Over There and take my place in the battle line. The call will come soon, I believe, for they say France needs men." This rumor pretty near caused a riot in the audience and Ralston turned and give us all a dirty look.

Then Bridget come in again and said dinner was ready, and Shaw says, "It'll seem funny to set down wile I eat." Which was the first

S. J. Perelman

time I ever knew that army captains took their meals off the mantelpiece.

Wile the Shaws was out eating, their maid stayed in the living room, where she'd be out of their way. It seems that Ralston had wrote a swell speech for her to make in this spot, about what a tough thing war is, to come along and separate a happy young couple like the Shaws that hadn't only been married a year. But the speech started "This is terrible!" and when Bridget got that much of it out, some egg in the gallery hollered, "You said a mouthful, kid!" and stopped the show.

The house finally quieted down, but Katie was dumb for the first time in her life. She couldn't say the line that was the cue for the phone to ring, and she had to go over and answer a silent call. It was for the captain, and him and his wife both come back on the stage.

"Maizie," he says, after he'd hung up, "it's came! That was my general! We sail for France in half an hour!"

"O husband!" says Maizie. "This is the end!"

"Nonsense!" says Shaw with a brave smile. "This war means death for only a small per cent. of our men."

"And almost no captains," yells the guy in the gallery.

Shaw gets ready to go, but she tells him to wait till she puts on her wraps; she'll go down to the dock and see him off.

"No, darling," he says. "Our orders is secret. I can't give you the name of our ship or where we're sailing from."

So he goes and she flops on the couch w'inning because he wouldn't tell her whether his ship left from Times Square or Grand Central.

They rung the curtain down here to make you think six days has passed. When it goes up again, Maizie's setting on the couch, holding the little one. Pretty soon Bridget comes in with the evening paper.

"They's a big headline, mum," she says. "A troopship has been torpedoed."

Well, when she handed her the paper, I could see the big headline. It said, "Phillies Hit Grimes Hard." But Maizie may of had

Katie Wins a Home

a bet on Brooklyn. Anyway, she begin trembling and finally fell over stiff. So Bridget picked up the paper and read it out loud:

“Amongst the men lost was Capt. F. Shaw of New York.”

Down went the curtain again and the first act was over, and some jokesmith in the audience yelled, “Author! Author!”

“He’s sunk!” said the egg in the gallery.

Well, Maizie was the only one in the whole theater that thought Shaw was dead. The rest of us just wished it. Still you couldn’t blame her much for getting a wrong idear, as it was Nov. 11, 1918—over a year later—when the second act begins and she hadn’t heard from him in all that time. It wasn’t never brought out why. Maybe he’d forgot her name or maybe it was Burleson’s fault, like everything else.

The scene was the same old living room and Maizie was setting on the same old couch, but she was all dressed up like Elsie Ferguson. It comes out that she’s expecting a gentleman friend, a Mr. Thornton, to dinner. She asks Bridget if she thinks it would be wrong of her to accept the guy the next time he proposed. He’s ast her every evening for the last six months and she can’t stall him much longer. So Bridget says it’s all right if she loves him, but Maizie don’t know if she loves him or not, but he looks so much like her late relic that she can’t hardly tell the difference and besides, she has got to either marry or go to work, or her and the little one will starve. They’s a knock at the door and Thornton comes in. Him and the absent captain looks as much alike as two brothers, yours and mine. Bridget ducks and Thornton proposes. Maizie says, “Before I answer, I must tell you a secret. Captain Shaw didn’t leave me all alone. I have a little one, a boy.” “Oh, I love kiddies,” says Thornton. “Can I see him?” So she says it’s seven o’clock and the little one’s supposed to of been put to bed, but she has Bridget go get him.

The little one’s entrance was the sensation of this act. In Act 1 he was just three or four towels, but now Bridget can’t even carry him across the stage, and when she put him on his feet, he comes up pretty near to her shoulder. And when Thornton ast him would he

S. J. Perelman

like to have a new papa, he says, "Yes, because my other papa's never coming back."

Well, they say a woman can't keep a secret, but if Thornton had been nosing round for six months and didn't know till now that they was a spanker like Bobbie in the family circle, I wouldn't hardly call Maizie the town gossip.

After the baby'd went back to read himself to sleep and Mrs. Shaw had yessed her new admirer, Bridget dashed in yelling that the armistice was signed and held up the evening paper for Maizie and Thornton to see. The great news was announced in code. It said: "Phillies Hit Grimes Hard." And it seemed kind of silly to not come right out and say "Armistice Signed!" Because as I recall, even we saps out here in South Bend had knew it since three o'clock that morning.

The last act was in the same place, on Christmas Eve, 1918.

Maizie and her second husband had just finished doing up presents for the little one. We couldn't see the presents, but I suppose they was giving him a cocktail shaker and a shaving set. Though when he come on the stage you could see he hadn't aged much since Act II. He hadn't even begin to get bald.

Thornton and the Mrs. went off somewhere and left the kid alone, but all of a sudden the front door opened and in come old Cap Shaw, on crutches. He seen the kid and called to him. "Who are you?" says the little one. "I'm Santa Claus," says the Cap, "and I've broughten you a papa for Christmas." "I don't want no papa," says Bobbie. "I've just got a new one." Then Bridget popped in and seen "the master" and hollered, "A ghost!" So he got her calmed down and she tells him what's came off. "It was in the paper that Capt. F. Shaw of New York was lost," she says. "It must of been another Capt. F. Shaw!" he says.

"It's an odd name," hollered the guy in the gallery.

The Captain thinks it all over and decides it's his move. He makes Bridget promise to never tell that she seen him and he says good-by to she and the kid and goes out into the night.

Maizie comes in, saying she heard a noise and what was it? Was

Katie Wins a Home

somebody here? "Just the boy with the evening paper," says Bridget. And the cat's got Bobbie's tongue. And Maizie don't even ask for the paper. She probably figured to herself it was the old story; that Grimes was still getting his bumps.

Well, I wished you could of read what the papers wrote up about the show. One of them said that Bridget seen a ghost at the Olney theater last night and if anybody else wanted to see it, they better go quick because it wouldn't be walking after this week. Not even on crutches. The mildest thing they said about Ralston was that he was even funnier than when he was in the Follies and tried to be. And they said the part of Bridget was played by a young actress that they hoped would make a name for herself, because Ralston had probably called her all he could think of.

We waited at the stage door that night and when Kate come out, she was crying. Ralston had canned her from the show.

"That's nothing to cry about," I says. "You're lucky. It's just like as if a conductor had put you off a train a couple of minutes before a big smash-up."

The programme had been to all go somewhere for supper and celebrate the play's success. But all Katie wanted now was to get in a taxi and go home and hide.

On the way, I ast her how much she was in so far.

"Just ten thousand," she says.

"Ten thousand!" I said. "Why, they was only one piece of scenery and that looked like they'd bought it secondhand from the choir boys' minstrels. They couldn't of spent one thousand, let alone ten."

"We had to pay the theater a week's rent in advance," she says. "And Jimmy give five thousand to a man for the idear."

"The idear for what?" I ast.

"The idear for the play," she said.

"That stops me!" I says. "This baby furnishes idears for all the good actors in the world, but when he wants one for himself, he goes out and pays \$5,000 for it. And if he got a bargain, you're Mrs. Fiske."

S. J. Perelman

“Who sold him the idear?” ast Ella.

“He wouldn’t tell me,” says Kate.

“Ponzi,” I said.

Ralston called Kate up the next noon and made a date with her at the theater. He said he was sorry he’d been rough. Before she went I ast her to give me a check for the forty thousand she had left so’s I could buy back some of her bonds.

“I haven’t got only \$25,000,” she says. “I advanced Jimmy fifteen thousand for his own account, so’s he wouldn’t have to bother me every time they was bills to meet.”

So I said: “Listen: I’ll go see him with you and if he don’t come clean with that money, I’ll knock him deader’n his play.”

“Thank you!” she says. “I’ll tend to my own affairs alone.”

She come back late in the afternoon, all smiles.

“Everything’s all right,” she said. “I gave him his choice of letting me be in the play or giving me my money.”

“And which did he choose?” I ast her.

“Neither one,” she says. “We’re going to get married.”

“Bridget” went into the ashcan Saturday night and the wedding come off Monday. Monday night they left for Boston, where the Follies was playing. Kate told they’d took Ralston back at the same salary he was getting before.

“How much is that?” I ast her.

“Four hundred a week,” she says.

Well, two or three days after they’d left, I got up my nerve and says to the Mrs.:

“Do you remember what we moved to the Big Town for? We done it to see Life and get Katie a husband. Well, we got her a kind of a husband and I’ll tell the world we seen Life. How about moseying back to South Bend?”

“But we haven’t no home there now.”

“Nor we ain’t had none since we left there,” I says. “I’m going down and see what’s the first day we can get a couple of lowers.”

“Get uppers if it’s quicker,” says the Mrs.

Katie Wins a Home

So here we are, really enjoying ourselfs for the first time in pretty near two years. And Katie's in New York, enjoying herself, too, I suppose. She ought to be, married to a comedian. It must be such fun to just set and listen to him talk.

OGDEN NASH:

“I wish I had written
The Fox of Peapack

by E. B. WHITE”

The mere mention of Ogden Nash is enough to stir almost anyone into quotation of some one of his light verse classics. Mr. Nash, author of HARD LINES, THE PRIMROSE PATH, I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF, and many other books, gives the nod to another master of verse in his choice of this poem.

A Ballad of Somerset County

The fox of Peapack left his earth
And trailed his brush across New Jersey,
Absorbed in apple-fall and mirth,
And feeling very loud and nirsey.

The leaf was brown beneath his paw,
The sky was cloud-besirk and frowsy,
The fox of Peapack clicked his jaw
And noticed he was feeling lousy.

Down wind he took his bushy way
To buy his vixen wife a trinket,
And as he skirted Peapack Bay
He stopped, at intervals, to drink it.

Forgetting what he'd gone to get,
And falling in with thieves and planters,

Permission of the author. Copyright 1929 by E. B. White. Originally published in *The New Yorker*.

The Fox of Peapack

He bought his wife a table set,
A Mason jar, and two decanters.

Well pleased withal, he started back
Through fen and weir and Lincoln highway,
Quite anxious to avoid the pack
That hunt in every Peapack byway.

Upon the funniest fen of all
With Peapack still a mile aborning,
He heard the scarlet hunter call
And knew it must be Thursday morning.

He smelled the hound, he smelled the horse,
He smelled the Peapack store and steeple,
And lastly, as a matter of course,
He also smelled the Peapack people.

Determined that he wouldn't let
His Mason jar be confiscated,
He calmly burned the table set
And watched the hunters while he waited.

Amused, he hung around a while
At fifty or a hundred paces
To analyze the hunters' guile
And note the curious Peapack faces.

He then went home, athwart with life,
To wash and do a little fixin',
"I'm back from town," he told his wife.
"I see you are," replied the vixen.

They ate a bit of sobel stew
And read a page or so from Genesis,
They carried out a threat or two
And certain harmless little menaces.

Ogden Nash

“What did you bring me?” asked his spouse,
Who spoke in genitives and datives.
“I brought you something for the house
“And news about the Peapack natives.”

He showed his wife the Mason jar,
Concealing it with quips and banter
And managed, in the end, to mar
The scene by breaking one decanter.

“I saw the hunt today,” he said,
“I saw the people plainly, honey;
“I saw the M.F.H. in red,
“And listen, dear, it’s pretty funny.

“I smelled the hound, I smelled the horse,
“I smelled the Peapack store and steeple,
“And lastly, as a matter of course,
“I also smelled the Peapack people.”

They talked it over in a pet,
The fox’s voice grew loud and mannish:
“I now regard the hunting set
“As disagreeable and clannish.

“There’s this about it,” said the fox,
Dropping his wife a graceful curtsey,
“It seems to me a paradox
“When rural folk go hurtsy-turtsy.

“I like the country hereabout,
“The Peapack store, the Peapack steeple,
“But now it’s time you found it out:
“*I do not like the Peapack people.*”

The Fox of Peapack

“That settles it,” the vixen said
“Get down our satchel and our *wee* pack,
“We’ll put the Mason jar in bed
“And get the devil out of Peapack.”

Next day they went. They left their earth
And trailed their brushes ’cross New Jersey,
Absorbed in apple-fall and mirth,
And acting very loud and nirsey.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY:

"I wish I had written

The End of the Voyage

from THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS

by JOSEPH CONRAD"

Mr. Morley, essayist-poet-novelist-critic-bibliophile, can count his readers (and his published works) by legions. The mere mention of PARNASSUS ON WHEELS, WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS, and KITTY FOYLE recalls the many other favorites. As one of America's most acknowledged men of letters, both Mr. Morley's choice and his remarks on it, are particularly noteworthy: "As a reader for myself—apart from what commission I have in the way of occasional public comment—I am sensitive, secret, and adamantine selfish. If I know a thing good for me I care less than turtle eggs if anyone else conspires—or conspires. I am not, and never have been, and never could be, and don't intend to be, a methodical and well-remembering reader. I read much in haste, for the mercy of distraction or amusement or as we now have the habit of saying, for Escape. Not escape away from anything, but escape into—into one's better and more certain assurances. It amazes and disturbs me, more than here is the place to say, how few people seem to have anything of their own into which they would wish to escape. Hazlitt and Walt Whitman were (for me) great teachers in this matter: to know how far, or how much, to read . . . and when to quit. The man who is genuinely interested in his own mind and experience, his own impossible and godlike fancies, dare not read too absorbently. So it is likely that he has read few of the world's most famous books; and when he did he forgot them at once. He reads perhaps with abdicated brain; all feeling and impression.

"Impulsive and impromptu, the above is a disclaimer of any importance of my feeling except for myself. So I can now pass on to say that for me there can be no hesitation in my plain first choice. In our mature lifetime we (I mean I) have absorbed only one full-scale and utterly magical talent in fiction. I give you the work of Joseph Conrad. I'd like to give you a dozen passages or pieces: whether from his PERSONAL RECORD, or THE MIRROR OF THE SEA, or section IV of THE SHADOW LINE, or whatever one might

The End of the Voyage

discover for himself. But I guess it will have to be the closing pages of THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS. I will not attempt to ‘evaluate’ (a word so comically frequent now) the dire beauty of that merciless-merciful tale. Years ago I wrote: ‘See him coming home up-Channel, by God! THE NIGGER may look, on the shelf, like just a book. But it is life, a microcosm. Lovely and solitary as the “Narcissus” herself it sails the ocean of romantic fiction, a celibate story, lonely, beautiful, and proud.’”

A WEEK afterwards the “Narcissus” entered the chops of the Channel.

Under white wings she skimmed low over the blue sea like a great tired bird speeding to its nest. The clouds raced with her mast-heads; they rose astern enormous and white, soared to the zenith, flew past, and falling down the wide curve of the sky, seemed to dash head-long into the sea—the clouds swifter than the ship, more free, but without a home. The coast to welcome her stepped out of space into the sunshine. The lofty headlands trod masterfully into the sea; the wide bays smiled in the light; the shadows of homeless clouds ran along the sunny plains, leaped over valleys, without a check darted up the hills, rolled down the slopes; and the sunshine pursued them with patches of running brightness. On the brows of dark cliffs white lighthouses shone in pillars of light. The Channel glittered like a blue mantle shot with gold and starred by the silver of the capping seas. The “Narcissus” rushed past the headlands and the bays. Outward-bound vessels crossed her track, lying over, and with their masts stripped for a slogging fight with the hard sou’wester. And, inshore, a string of smoking steamboats waddled, hugging the coast, like migrating and amphibious monsters, distrustful of the restless waves.

At night the headlands retreated, the bays advanced into one unbroken line of gloom. The lights of the earth mingled with the lights of heaven; and above the tossing lanterns of a trawling fleet a great

From THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS by Joseph Conrad. Copyright, 1914, by Doubleday and Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc., and William Heinemann Ltd.

Christopher Morley

lighthouse shone steadily, like an enormous riding light burning above a vessel of fabulous dimensions. Below its steady glow, the coast, stretching away straight and black, resembled the high side of an indestructible craft riding motionless upon the immortal and un-resting sea. The dark land lay alone in the midst of waters, like a mighty ship bestarred with vigilant lights—a ship carrying the burden of millions of lives—a ship freighted with dross and with jewels, with gold and with steel. She towered up immense and strong, guarding priceless traditions and untold suffering, sheltering glorious memories and base forgetfulness, ignoble virtues and splendid transgressions. A great ship! For ages had the ocean battered in vain her enduring sides, she was there when the world was vaster and darker, when the sea was great and mysterious, and ready to surrender the prize of fame to audacious men. A ship mother of fleets and nations! The great flagship of the race; stronger than the storms! and anchored in the open sea.

The "Narcissus," heeling over to off-shore gusts, rounded the South Foreland, passed through the Downs, and, in tow, entered the river. Shorn of the glory of her white wings, she wound obediently after the tug through the maze of invisible channels. As she passed them the red-painted light-vessels, swung at their moorings, seemed for an instant to sail with great speed in the rush of tide, and the next moment were left hopelessly behind. The big buoys on the tails of banks slipped past her sides very low, and, dropping in her wake, tugged at their chains like fierce watch-dogs. The reach narrowed; from both sides the land approached the ship. She went steadily up the river. On the riverside slopes the houses appeared in groups—seemed to stream down the declivities at a run to see her pass, and, checked by the mud of the foreshore, crowded on the banks. Further on, the tall factory chimneys appeared in insolent bands and watched her go by, like a straggling crowd of slim giants, swaggering and upright under the black plummets of smoke, cavalierly aslant. She swept round the bends; an impure breeze shrieked a welcome between her stripped spars; and the land, closing in, stepped between the ship and the sea.

The End of the Voyage

A low cloud hung before her—a great opalescent and tremulous cloud, that seemed to rise from the steaming brows of millions of men. Long drifts of smoky vapours soiled it with livid trails; it throbbed to the beat of millions of hearts, and from it came an immense and lamentable murmur—the murmur of millions of lips praying, cursing, sighing, jeering—the undying murmur of folly, regret, and hope exhaled by the crowds of the anxious earth. The “*Narcissus*” entered the cloud; the shadows deepened; on all sides there was the clang of iron, the sound of mighty blows, shrieks, yells. Black barges drifted stealthily on the murky stream. A mad jumble of begrimed walls loomed up vaguely in the smoke, bewildering and mournful, like a vision of disaster. The tugs backed and filled in the stream, to hold the ship steady at the dock-gates; from her bows two lines went through the air whistling, and struck at the land viciously, like a pair of snakes. A bridge broke in two before, as if by enchantment; big hydraulic capstans began to turn all by themselves, as though animated by a mysterious and unholy spell. She moved through a narrow lane of water between two low walls of granite, and men with check-ropes in their hands kept pace with her, walking on the broad flagstones. A group waited impatiently on each side of the vanished bridge: rough heavy men in caps; sallow-faced men in high hats; two bareheaded women; ragged children, fascinated, and with wide eyes. A cart coming at a jerky trot pulled up sharply. One of the women screamed at the silent ship—“Hallo, Jack!” without looking at anyone in particular, and all hands looked at her from the forecastle head.—“Stand clear! Stand clear of that rope!” cried the dockmen, bending over stone posts. The crowd murmured, stamped where they stood.—“Let go your quarter-checks! Let go!” sang out a ruddy-faced old man on the quay. The ropes splashed heavily falling in the water, and the “*Narcissus*” entered the dock.

The stony shores ran away right and left in straight lines, enclosing a sombre and rectangular pool. Brick walls rose high above the water—soulless walls, staring through hundreds of windows as troubled and dull as the eyes of over-fed brutes. At their base monstrous iron cranes crouched, with chains hanging from their long necks, bal-

Christopher Morley

ancing cruel-looking hooks over the decks of lifeless ships. A noise of wheels rolling over stones, the thump of heavy things falling, the racket of feverish winches, the grinding of strained chains, floated on the air. Between high buildings the dust of all the continents soared in short flights; and a penetrating smell of perfumes and dirt, of spices and hides, of things costly and of things filthy, pervaded the space, made for it an atmosphere precious and disgusting. The "Narcissus" came gently into her berth; the shadows of the soulless walls fell upon her, the dust of all the continents leaped upon her deck, and a swarm of strange men, clambering up her sides, took possession of her in the name of the sordid earth. She had ceased to live.

A toff in a black coat and high hat scrambled with agility, came up to the second mate, shook hands, and said: "Hallo, Herbert." It was his brother. A lady appeared suddenly. A real lady, in a black dress and with a parasol. She looked extremely elegant in the midst of us, and as strange as if she had fallen there from the sky. Mr. Baker touched his cap to her. It was the master's wife. And very soon the Captain, dressed very smartly and in a white shirt, went with her over the side. We didn't recognise him at all till, turning on the quay, he called to Mr. Baker: "Remember to wind up the chronometers to-morrow morning." An underhand lot of seedy-looking chaps with shifty eyes wandered in and out of the forecastle looking for a job—they said.—"More likely for something to steal," commented Knowles, cheerfully. Poor beggars. Who cared? Weren't we home! But Mr. Baker went for one of them who had given him some cheek, and we were delighted. Everything was delightful.—"I've finished aft, sir," called out Mr. Creighton.—"No water in the well, sir," reported for the last time the carpenter, sounding-rod in hand. Mr. Baker glanced along the deck at the expectant group of sailors, glanced aloft at the yards.—"Ough! That will do, men," he grunted. The group broke up. The voyage was ended.

Rolled-up beds went flying over the rail; lashed chests went sliding down the gangway—mighty few of both at that. "The rest is having a cruise off the Cape," explained Knowles enigmatically to a dock-loafer with whom he had struck a sudden friendship. Men ran,

The End of the Voyage

calling to one another, hailing utter strangers to "lend a hand with the dunnage," then with sudden decorum approached the mate to shake hands before going ashore,—“Good-bye, sir,” they repeated in various tones. Mr. Baker grasped hard palms, grunted in a friendly manner at every one, his eyes twinkled.—“Take care of your money, Knowles. Ough! Soon get a nice wife if you do.” The lame man was delighted.—“Good-bye, sir,” said Belfast, with emotion, wringing the mate’s hand, and looked up with swimming eyes. “I thought I would take ’im ashore with me,” he went on, plaintively. Mr. Baker did not understand, but said kindly: “Take care of yourself, Craik,” and the bereaved Belfast went over the rail mourning and alone.

Mr. Baker, in the sudden peace of the ship, moved about solitary and grunting, trying door-handles, peering into dark places, never done—a model chief mate! No one waited for him ashore. Mother dead; father and two brothers, Yarmouth fishermen, drowned together on the Dogger Bank; sister married and unfriendly. Quite a lady. Married to the leading tailor of a little town, and its leading politician, who did not think his sailor brother-in-law quite respectable enough for him. Quite a lady, quite a lady, he thought, sitting down for a moment’s rest on the quarter-hatch. Time enough to go ashore and get a bite and sup, and a bed somewhere. He didn’t like to part with a ship. No one to think about then. The darkness of a misty evening fell, cold and damp, upon the deserted deck; and Mr. Baker sat smoking, thinking of all the successive ships to whom through many long years he had given the best of a seaman’s care. And never a command in sight. Not once! “I haven’t somehow the cut of a skipper about me,” he meditated, placidly, while the shipkeeper (who had taken possession of the galley), a wizened old man with bleared eyes, cursed him in whispers for “hanging about so.”—“Now, Creighton,” he pursued the unenvious train of thought, “quite a gentleman . . . swell friends . . . will get on. Fine young fellow . . . a little more experience.” He got up and shook himself. “I’ll be back first thing to-morrow morning for the hatches. Don’t you let them touch anything before I come,

Christopher Morley

shipkeeper," he called out. Then, at last, he also went ashore—a model chief mate!

The men scattered by the dissolving contact of the land came together once more in the shipping office. "The 'Narcissus' pays off," shouted outside a glazed door a brass-bound old fellow with a crown and the capitals B.T. on his cap. A lot trooped in at once but many were late. The room was large, white-washed, and bare; a counter surmounted by a brass-wire grating fenced off a third of the dusty space, and behind the grating a pasty-faced clerk, with his hair parted in the middle, had the quick, glittering eyes and the vivacious, jerky movements of a caged bird. Poor Captain Allistoun also in there, and sitting before a little table with piles of gold and notes on it, appeared subdued by his captivity. Another Board of Trade bird was perching on a high stool near the door: an old bird that did not mind the chaff of elated sailors. The crew of the "Narcissus," broken up into knots, pushed in the corners. They had new shore togs, smart jackets that looked as if they had been shaped with an axe, glossy trousers that seemed made of crumpled sheet-iron, collarless flannel shirts, shiny new boots. They tapped on shoulders, button-holed one another, asked: "Where did you sleep last night?" whispered gaily, slapped their thighs with bursts of subdued laughter. Most had clean, radiant faces; only one or two turned up dishevelled and sad; the two young Norwegians looked tidy, meek, and altogether of a promising material for the kind ladies who patronise the Scandinavian Home. Wamibo, still in his working clothes, dreamed, upright and burly in the middle of the room, and, when Archie came in, woke up for a smile. But the wide-awake clerk called out a name, and the paying-off business began.

One by one they came up to the pay-table to get the wages of their glorious and obscure toil. They swept the money with care into broad palms, rammed it trustfully into trousers' pockets, or, turning their backs on the table, reckoned with difficulty in the hollow of their stiff hands.—"Money right? Sign the release. There—there," repeated the clerk, impatiently. "How stupid those sailors are!" he thought. Singleton came up, venerable—and uncertain as to daylight; brown

The End of the Voyage

drops of tobacco juice hung in his white beard; his hands, that never hesitated in the great light of the open sea, could hardly find the small pile of gold in the profound darkness of the shore. “Can’t write?” said the clerk, shocked. “Make a mark, then.” Singleton painfully sketched in a heavy cross, blotted the page. “What a disgusting old brute,” muttered the clerk. Somebody opened the door for him, and the patriarchal seaman passed through unsteadily, without as much as a glance at any of us.

Archie displayed a pocket-book. He was chaffed. Belfast, who looked wild, as though he had already luffed up through a public-house or two, gave signs of emotion and wanted to speak to the Captain privately. The master was surprised. They spoke through the wires, and we could hear the Captain saying: “I’ve given it up to the Board of Trade.”—“I should’ve liked to get something of his,” mumbled Belfast.—“But you can’t, my man. It’s given up, locked and sealed, to the Marine Office,” expostulated the master; and Belfast stood back, with drooping mouth and troubled eyes. In a pause of the business we heard the master and the clerk talking. We caught: “James Wait—deceased—found no papers of any kind—no relations—no trace—the Office must hold his wages then.” Donkin entered. He seemed out of breath, was grave, full of business. He went straight to the desk, talked with animation to the clerk, who thought him an intelligent man. They discussed the account, dropping *h*’s against one another as if for a wager—very friendly. Captain Allistoun paid. “I give you a bad discharge,” he said, quietly. Donkin raised his voice: “I don’t want your bloomin’ discharge—keep it. I’m goin’ ter ‘ave a job ashore.” He turned to us. “No more bloomin’ sea fur me,” he said, aloud. All looked at him. He had better clothes, had an easy air, appeared more at home than any of us; he stared with assurance, enjoying the effect of his declaration. “Yuss, I ’ave friends well off. That’s more’n you got. But I am a man. Yer shipmates for all that. Who’s comin’ fur a drink?”

No one moved. There was a silence; a silence of blank faces and stony looks. He waited a moment, smiled bitterly, and went to the door. There he faced round once more. “Yer won’t. Yer bloomin’

Christopher Morley

lot of yrpocrits. No? What 'ave I done to yer? Did I bully yer? Did I 'urt yer? Did I? . . . You won't drink? . . . No! . . . Then may yer die of thirst, hevery mother's son of yer! Not one of yer 'as the sperrit of a bug. Ye'rr the scum of the world. Work and starve!"

He went out, and slammed the door with such violence that the old Board of Trade bird nearly fell off his perch.

"He's mad," declared Archie.—"No! No! He's drunk," insisted Belfast, lurching about, and in a maudlin tone. Captain Allistoun sat smiling thoughtfully at the cleared pay-table.

Outside, on Tower Hill, they blinked, hesitated clumsily, as if blinded by the strange quality of the hazy light, as if discomposed by the view of so many men; and they who could hear one another in the howl of gales seemed deafened and distracted by the dull roar of the busy earth. "To the Black Horse! To the Black Horse!" cried some. "Let us have a drink together before we part." They crossed the road, clinging to one another. Only Charley and Belfast, wandered off alone. As I came up I saw a red-faced, blowsy woman, in a grey shawl, and with dusty, fluffy hair, fall on Charley's neck. It was his mother. She slobbered over him: "Oh, my boy! My boy!"—"Leggo of me," said Charley. "Leggo, mother!" I was passing him at the time, and over the untidy head of the blubbering woman he gave me a humorous smile and a glance ironic, courageous, and profound, that seemed to put all my knowledge of life to shame. I nodded, and passed on, but heard him say again, good-naturedly: "If you leggo of me this minyt—ye shall 'ave a bob for a drink out of my pay." In the next few steps I came upon Belfast. He caught my arm with tremulous enthusiasm.—"I couldn't go wi' 'em," he stammered, indicating by a nod our noisy crowd, that drifted slowly along the other sidewalk. "When I think of Jimmy . . . Poor Jim! When I think of him I have no heart for drink. You were his chum, too . . . but I pulled him out . . . didn't I? Short wool, he had. . . . Yes. And I stole the blooming pie. . . . He wouldn't go. . . . He wouldn't go for nobody." He burst into tears. "I never touched him—never—never!" he sobbed. "He went for me like . . . like . . . a lamb."

The End of the Voyage

I disengaged myself gently. Belfast's crying fits generally ended in a fight with some one, and I wasn't anxious to stand the brunt of his inconsolable sorrow. Moreover, two bulky policemen stood near by, looking at us with a disapproving and incorruptible gaze.—“So long!” I said, and went on my way.

But at the corner I stopped to take my last look at the crew of the “Narcissus.” They were swaying irresolute and noisy on the broad flagstones before the Mint. They were bound for the Black Horse, where men, in fur caps with brutal faces and in shirt sleeves, dispense out of varnished barrels the illusions of strength, mirth, happiness; the illusion of splendour and poetry of life, to the paid-off crews of southern-going ships. From afar I saw them discoursing, with jovial eyes and clumsy gestures, while the sea of life thundered into their ears ceaseless and unheeded. And swaying about there on the white stones, surrounded by the hurry and clamour of men, they appeared to be creatures of another kind—lost, alone, forgetful and doomed; they were like castaways, like reckless and joyous castaways, like mad castaways making merry in the storm and upon an insecure ledge of a treacherous rock. The roar of the town resembled the roar of toppling breakers, merciless and strong, with a loud voice and cruel purpose; but overhead the clouds broke; a flood of sunshine streamed down the walls of grimy houses. The dark knot of seamen drifted in sunshine. To the left of them the trees in Tower Gardens sighed, the stones of the Tower gleaming, seemed to stir in the play of light, as if remembering suddenly all the great joys and sorrows of the past, the fighting prototypes of these men, pressgangs, mutinous cries; the wailing of women by the riverside, and the shouts of men welcoming victories. The sunshine of heaven fell like a gift of grace on the mud of earth, on the remembering and mute stones, on greed, selfishness; on the anxious faces of forgetful men. And to the right of the dark group the stained front of the Mint, cleansed by the flood of light, stood out for a moment dazzling and white like a marble palace in a fairy tale. The crew of the “Narcissus” drifted out of sight.

I never saw them again. The sea took some, the steamers took

Christopher Morley

others, the graveyards of the earth will account for the rest. Singleton has no doubt taken with him the long record of his faithful work into the peaceful depths of an hospitable sea. And Donkin, who never did a decent day's work in his life, no doubt earns his living by dis coursing with filthy eloquence upon the rights of labour to live. So be it! Let the earth and the sea each have its own.

A gone shipmate, like any other man, is gone for ever; and I never met one of them again. But at times the spring-flood of memory sets with force up the dark River of the Nine Bends. Then on the waters of the forlorn stream drifts a ship—a shadowy ship manned by a crew of Shades. They pass and make a sign, in a shadowy hail. Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives? Good-bye, brothers! You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy foresail; or tossing aloft, invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale.

CONRAD AIKEN:

"I wish I had written

An Anthem of Earth

by FRANCIS THOMPSON"

The name of Conrad Aiken suggests poetry and short stories, novels and critical essays. However, in the field of poetry he has received his greatest recognition with the award of the Pulitzer Prize in 1929 for his volume of SELECTED POEMS. The wealth of his experience as poet and student of poetry focuses special attention on this majestic poem, a choice Mr. Aiken arrived at with assurance. "Gosh, you certainly put it up to me. I've been torn into a thousand pieces. 'Lycidas'? 'L'Allegro'? Something of John Donne? Keats? Rilke? But as last I settled where I really knew all along that I would—on Francis Thompson's 'An Anthem of Earth.' Why? Because I've always thought it the most neglected, and the most unreasonably neglected, of the truly great poems in the English language: great because it is not only profound, and richly thought, but also because it is magnificently and eloquently imaginative in a way that most contemporary poets seem to have forgotten. And even if it weren't these things, it would insist upon being heard if only for its sheer beauty of texture and sound. Why it has never gotten into anthologies has always baffled me."

In nescientness, in nescientness,
Mother, we put these fleshly lendings on
Thou yield'st to thy poor children; took thy gift
Of life, which must, in all the after days,
Be craved again with tears,—
With fresh and still-petitionary tears.
Being once bound thine almsmen for that gift,

From THE COMPLETE WORKS OF FRANCIS THOMPSON, reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland, and Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., London. "An Anthem of Earth" is herein reprinted without the Proemion.

Conrad Aiken

We are bound to beggary, nor our own can call
The journal dole of customary life,
But after suit obsequious for't to thee.
Indeed this flesh, O Mother,
A beggar's gown, a client's badging,
We find, which from thy hands we simply took,
Naught dreaming of the after penury,
In nescientness.

In a little joy, in a little joy,
We wear awhile thy sore insignia,
Nor know thy heel o' the neck. O Mother! Mother!
Then what use knew I of thy solemn robes,
But as a child to play with them? I bade thee
Leave thy great husbandries, thy grave designs,
Thy tedious state which irked my ignorant years,
Thy winter-watches, suckling of the grain,
Severe premeditation taciturn
Upon the brooded Summer, thy chill cares,
And all thy ministries majestical,
To sport with me, thy darling. Thought I not
Thou sett'st thy seasons forth processional
To pamper me with pageant,—thou thyself
My fellow-gamester, appanage of mine arms?
Then what wild Dionysia I, young Bacchanal,
Danced in thy lap! Ah, for thy gravity!
Then, O Earth, thou rang'st beneath me,
Rocked to Eastward, rocked to Westward,
Even with the shifted
Poise and footing of my thought!
I brake through thy doors of sunset,
Ran before the hooves of sunrise,
Shook thy matron tresses down in fancies
Wild and wilful

An Anthem of Earth

As a poet's hand could twine them;
Caught in my fantasy's crystal chalice
The Bow, as its cataract of colours
Plashed to thee downward;
Then when thy circuit swung to nightward,
Night the abhorred, night was a new dawning,
Celestial dawning
Over the ultimate marges of the soul;
Dusk grew turbulent with fire before me,
And like the windy arras waved with dreams,
Sleep I took not for my bedfellow,
Who could waken
To a revel, an inexhaustible
Wassail of orgiac imageries;
Then while I wore thy sore insignia
In a little joy, O Earth, in a little joy;
Loving thy beauty in all creatures born of thee,
Children, and the sweet-essenced body of woman;
Feeling not yet upon my neck thy foot,
But breathing warm of thee as infants breathe
New from their mother's morning bosom. So I,
Risen from thee, restless winnower of the heaven,
Most Hermes-like, did keep
My vital and resilient path, and felt
The play of wings about my fledgèd heel—
Sure on the verges of precipitous dream,
Swift in its springing
From jut to jut of inaccessible fancies,
In a little joy.

In a little thought, in a little thought,
We stand and eye thee in a grave dismay,
With sad and doubtful questioning, when first
Thou speak'st to us as men: like sons who hear
Newly their mother's history, unthought

Conrad Aiken

Before, and say—‘She is not as we dreamed:
Ah me! we are beguiled!’ What art thou, then,
That art not our conceiving? Art thou not
Too old for thy young children? Or perchance,
Keep’st thou a youth perpetual-burnishable
Beyond thy sons decrepit? It is long
Since Time was first a fledgling;
Yet thou may’st be but as a pendant bulla
Against his stripling bosom swung. Alack!
For that we seem indeed
To have slipped the world’s great leaping-time, and come
Upon thy pinched and dozing days: these weeds,
These corporal leavings, thou not cast’st us new,
Fresh from thy craftship, like the lilies’ coats,
But foist’st us off
With hasty tarnished piecings negligent,
Snippets and waste
From old ancestral wearings,
That have seen sorrier usage; remainder-flesh
After our father’s surfeits; nay with chinks,
Some of us, that, if speech may have free leave,
Our souls go out at elbows. We are sad
With more than our sires’ heaviness, and with
More than their weakness weak; we shall not be
Mighty with all their mightiness, nor shall not
Rejoice with all their joy. Ay, Mother! Mother!
What is this Man, thy darling kissed and cuffed,
Thou lustingly engender’st,
To sweat, and make his brag, and rot,
Crowned with all honour and all shamefulness?
From nightly towers
He dogs the secret footsteps of the heavens,
Sifts in his hands the stars, weighs them as gold-dust,
And yet is he successive unto nothing

An Anthem of Earth

But patrimony of a little mold,
And entail of four planks. Thou hast made his mouth
Avid of all dominion and all mightiness,
All sorrow, all delight, all topless grandeurs,
All beauty, and all starry majesties,
And dim transtellar things;—even that it may,
Filled in the ending with a puff of dust,
Confess—‘It is enough.’ The world left empty
What that poor mouthful crams. His heart is builded
For pride, for potency, infinity,
All heights, all deeps, and all immensities,
Arrased with purple like the house of kings,—
To stall the grey-rat, and the carrion-worm
Statelily lodge. Mother of mysteries!
Sayer of dark sayings in a thousand tongues,
Who bringest forth no saying yet so dark
As we ourselves, thy darkest! We the young,
In a little thought, in a little thought,
At last confront thee, and ourselves in thee,
And wake disgarmented of glory: as one
On a mount standing, and against him stands,
On the mount adverse, crowned with westering rays,
The golden sun, and they two brotherly
Gaze each on each;
He faring down
To the dull vale, his Godhead peels from him
Till he can scarcely spurn the pebble—
For nothingness of new-found mortality—
That mutinies against his gallèd foot.
Littly he sets him to the daily way,
With all around the valleys growing grave,
And known things changed and strange; but he holds on,
Thou all the land of light be widowèd,
In a little thought.

Conrad Aiken

In a little strength, in a little strength,
We affront thy unveiled face intolerable,
Which yet we do sustain.

Though I the Orient never more shall feel
Break like a clash of cymbals, and my heart
Clang through my shaken body like a gong;
Nor ever more with spurted feet shall tread
I' the winepresses of song; naught's truly lost
That moulds to sprout forth gain: now I have on me
The high Phoebean priesthood, and that craves
An un rash utterance; not with flaunted hem
May the Muse enter in behind the veil,
Nor, though we hold the sacred dances good,
Shall the holy Virgins maenadize: ruled lips
Befit a votaress Muse.

Thence with no mutable, nor no gelid love,
I keep, O Earth, thy worship,
Though life slow, and the sobering Genius change
To a lamp his gusty torch. What though no more
Athwart its roseal glow
Thy face look forth triumphal? Tho putt'st on
Strange sanctities of pathos; like this knoll
Made derelict of day,
Couchant and shadowèd
Under dim Vesper's overloosened hair:
This, where embossèd with the half-blown seed
The solemn purple thistle stands in grass
Grey as an exhalation, when the bank
Holds mist for water in the nights of Fall.
Not to the boy, although his eyes be pure
As the prime snowdrop is
Ere the rash Phoebus break her cloister
Of sanctimonious snow;
Or Winter fasting sole on Himalay
Since those dove-nuncioed days

An Anthem of Earth

When Asia rose from bathing;
Not to such eyes,
Uneuphrasied with tears, the hierarchical
Vision lies unoccult, rank under rank
Through all create down-wheeling, from the Throne
Even to the bases of the pregnant ooze.
This is the enchantment, this is the exaltation,
The all-compensating wonder,
Giving to common things wild kindred
With the gold-tesserate floors of Jove;
Linking such heights and such humilities
Hand in hand in ordinal dances,
That I do think my tread,
Stirring the blossoms in the meadow-grass,
Flickers the unwithering stars.
This to the shunless fardel of the world
Nerves my uncurbèd back: that I endure,
The monstrous Temple's moveless caryatid,
With wide eyes calm upon the whole of things,
In a little strength.

In a little sight, in a little sight,
We learn from what in thee is credible
The incredible, with bloody clutch and feet
Clinging the painful juts of jaggèd faith.
Science, old noser in its prideful straw,
That with anatomising scalpel tents
Its three-inch of thy skin, and brags 'All's bare'—
The eyeless worm, that, boring, works the soil,
Making it capable for the crops of God;
Against its own dull will
Ministers poppies to our troublous thought,
A Balaam come to prophecy,—parables,
Nor of its parable itself is ware,
Grossly unwotting; all things has expounded,

Conrad Aiken

Reflux and influx, counts the sepulchre
The seminary of being, and extinction
The Ceres of existence: it discovers
Life in putridity, vigour in decay;
Dissolution even, and disintegration,
Which in our dull thoughts symbolize disorder,
Finds in God's thoughts irrefragable order,
And admirable the manner of our corruption
As of our health. It grafts upon the cypress
The tree of Life—Death dies on his own dart
Promising to our ashes perpetuity,
And to our perishable elements
Their proper imperishability; extracting
Medicaments from out mortality
Against too mortal cogitation; till
Even of the *caput mortuum* we do thus
Make a *memento vivere*. To such uses
I put the blinding knowledge of the fool,
Who in no order seeth ordinance;
Nor thrust my arm in nature shoulder-high,
And cry—"There's naught beyond!" How should I so,
That cannot with these arms of mine engirdle
All which I am; that am a foreigner
In mine own region? Who the chart shall draw
Of the strange courts and vaulty labyrinths,
The spacious tenements and wide pleasantries,
Innumerable corridors far-withdrawn,
Wherein I wander darkling, of myself?
Darkling I wander, nor I dare explore
The long arcane of those dim catacombs,
Where the rat memory does its burrows make,
Close-seal them as I may, and my stolen tread
Starts populace, a *gens lucifuga*;
That too strait seems my mind my mind to hold,
And I myself incontinent of me.

An Anthem of Earth

Then go I, my foul-venting ignorance
With scabby sapience plastered, aye forsooth!
Clap my wise foot-rule to the walls o' the world,
And vow—*A goodly house, but something ancient,*
And I can find no Master? Rather, nay,
By baffled seeing, something I divine
Which baffles, and a seeing set beyond;
And so with strenuous gazes sounding down,
Like to the day-long porer on a stream,
Whose last look is his deepest, I beside
This slow perpetual Time stand patiently,
In a little sight.

In a little dust, in a little dust,
Earth, thou reclaim'st us, who do all our lives
Find of thee but Egyptian villeinage.
Thou dost this body, this enhavocked realm,
Subject to ancient and ancestral shadows;
Descended passions sway it; it is distraught
With ghostly usurpation, dinned and fretted
With the still-tyrannous dead; a haunted tenement,
Peopled from barrows and outworn ossuaries.

Thou giv'st us life not half so willingly
As thou undost thy giving; thou that teem'st
The stealthy terror of the sinuous pard,
The lion manned with curlèd puissance,
The serpent, and all fair strong beasts of ravin,
Thyself most fair and potent beast of ravin,
And thy great eaters thou, the greatest, eat'st.
Thou hast devoured mammoth and mastodon,
And many a floating bank of fangs,
The scaly scourges of thy primal brine,
And the tower-crested plesiosaure.
Thou fill'st thy mouth with nations, gorgest slow

Conrad Aiken

On purple aeons of kings; man's hulking towers
Are carcase for thee, and to modern sun
Disglutt'st their splintered bones.
Rabble of Pharaohs and Arsacidae
Keep their cold house within thee; thou has sucked down
How many Ninevehs and Hecatompyloi,
And perished cities whose great phantasmata
O'erbrow the silent citizens of Dis:—
Hast not thy fill?
Tarry awhile, lean Earth, for thou shalt drink,
Even till thy dull throat sicken,
The draught thou grow'st most fat on; hear'st thou not
The world's knives bickering in their sheaths? O patience!
Much offal of a foul world comes thy way,
And man's superfluous cloud shall soon be laid
In a little blood.

In a little peace, in a little peace,
Thou dost rebate thy rigid purposes
Of imposed being, and relenting, mend'st
Too much, with naught. The westering Phoebus' horse
Paws i' the lucent dust as when he shocked
The East with rising; O how may I trace
In this decline that morning when we did
Sport 'twixt the claws of newly-whelped existence,
Which had not yet learned rending? we did then
Divinely stand, not knowing yet against us
Sentence had passed of life, nor commutation
Petitioning into death. What's he that of
The Free State argues? Tellus, bid him stoop,
Even where the low *hic jacet* answers him;
Thus low, O Man! there's freedom's seignory,
Tellus' most reverend sole free commonweal,
And model deeply-policied: there none
Stands on precedence, nor ambitiously

An Anthem of Earth

Woos the impartial worm, whose favours kiss
With liberal largesse all; there each is free
To be e'en what he must, which here did strive
So much to be he could not; there all do
Their uses just, with no flown questioning.
To be took by the hand of equal earth
They doff her livery, slip to the worm,
Which lacqueys them, their suits of maintenance,
And, that soiled workaday apparel cast,
Put on condition: Death's ungentle buffet
Alone makes ceremonial manumission;
So are the heavenly statutes set, and those
Uranian tables of the primal Law.
In a little peace, in a little peace,
Like fierce beasts that a common thirst makes brothers,
We draw together to one hid dark lake;
In a little peace, in a little peace,
We drain with all our burthens of dishonour
Into the cleansing sands o' the thirsty grave.
The fiery pomps, brave exhalations,
And all the glistering shows o' the seeming world,
Which the sight aches at, we unwinking see
Through the smoked glass of Death; Death, wherewith's fined
The muddy wine of life; that earth doth purge
Of her plethora of man; Death, that doth flush
The cumbered gutters of humanity;
Nothing, of nothing king, with front uncrowned,
Whose hand holds crownets; playmate swart o' the strong;
Tenebrous moon that flux and reflux draws
Of the high-tided man; skull-housèd asp
That stings the heel of kings; true Fount of Youth,
Where he that dips is deathless; being's drone-pipe;
Whose nostril turns to blight the shrivelled stars,
And thickens the lusty breathing of the sun;
Pontifical Death, that doth the crevasse bridge

Conrad Aiken

To the steep and trifid God; one mortal birth
That broker is of immortality.
Under this dreadful brother uterine,
This kinsman feared, Tellus, behold me come,
Thy son stern-nursed; who mortal-motherlike,
To turn they weanlings' mouth averse, embitter'st
Thine over-childed breast. Now, mortal-sonlike,
I thou hast suckled, Mother, I at last
Shall sustenant be to thee. Here I untrammel,
Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off
The bur o' the world, man's congregation shun,
And to the antique order of the dead
I take the tongueless vows: my cell is set
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended
In a little peace.

MARQUIS JAMES:

"I wish I had written

A Boy Comes to Boston

from PAUL REVERE & THE WORLD HE LIVED IN

by ESTHER FORBES"

Recognized by the Pulitzer Prize Committee for his biographies of Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson, Mr. James wears his laurels as one of our foremost biographers, and brings to his choice of this excerpt from Miss Forbes' book an instantly appreciated authority. His unstinting admiration of Miss Forbes' work is evident in his words: "When it comes to craftsmanship the novelists have it over the biographers like a tent. And some novels excel as history. What historian has recreated the early New England scene with the lively accuracy of Esther Forbes's PARADISE? After a year's background work for a novel involving Paul Revere, Miss Forbes decided to switch to straight biography. That PAUL REVERE & THE WORLD HE LIVED IN should have won a Pulitzer Prize is no wonder. It is the finest piece of literature in the field of biographical writing—proof of the kinship of biography, history and great novels. Miss Forbes begins with the arrival of Paul's father in Boston."

THERE had been week upon week of the cold grey fury of the North Atlantic, for it was midwinter when the little refugee, Apollos Rivoire, made his crossing. At such a season only the hardiest of passengers ventured much above deck. Bunks were dank, bread wormy, beef tainted, and many of these small sailing ships never made port, but at least the Atlantic was crossed in great company. God brooded upon the face of these waters. His hand parted the mountainous waves. He upheld the ships. Even if one drowned, it

From PAUL REVERE & THE WORLD HE LIVED IN, copyright, 1942, by Esther Forbes, reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

Marquis James

was by the Providence of God. Apollos did not drown. He entered Massachusetts Bay either late in 1715 or early in 1716.

Land at last! The first gull, the seaweed and the changing color of the sea. The smell of the littoral—that blue cloud on the horizon, which is not a cloud but the hills of Milton. And then the wizen passengers dared crawl on deck and gaze about them.

The ship nosed its way cautiously among the icy islands. On one of them masons were building the first lighthouse to be set up in the western world. There on Nix's Mate rattled iron cages holding together bird-pecked skeletons of pirates. Apollos could hear the short happy bark of seals, the ferocious laughter of gulls. There was only one tortuous channel leading into the inner harbor. No ship could enter without almost brushing against the brass cannon of Castle Island. Above the fort floated the flag of England. Governor's Island was on the right. Next Bird Island, where gulls and terns nested. Then for the first time a boy standing upon deck could see the greatest port in all America—the famous prosperous town of Boston.

From where he stood it was apparent that Boston was almost an island, being attached to the mainland by a flimsy mile-long neck of mud-flats. Storm and high tide might rush over this weak isthmus and then for a few hours Boston was an island indeed. The promontory was made up of rough steep hills—three large ones and a number of small ones. The valleys were covered by a jumble of roofs. Chimneys fluttered their tatters of smoke. Bristling steeples attested to the godliness of the inhabitants. The town looked much like any thriving North-European port except for one fact that must have been apparent even to a boy of thirteen. Boston was built almost entirely of wood.

An amphibious border skirted the town; a mass of piers, shipyards, stages for drying fish, distilleries, warehouses, wharves. The inner harbor was crowded with merchant ships, sloops and schooners, whalers, heel-tappers, ferries, lighters, fishing ketches. These Yankee sailors and merchants ‘carried’ not only for all North America, but for the West Indies and parts of Europe as well. Madagascar, Skanderoon, South America, already knew these smart ships. Boston,

A Boy Comes to Boston

by nature some seven hundred acres and no larger than a large farm, was already badly crowded with fifteen thousand inhabitants. The town was beginning to bulge out over the waterfront. But if they needed more land they would make it (there were enough hills to cut down and throw into the sea). If they needed more freedom for their ships (England already had plenty of laws they disregarded), they would take that too. These Yankees had the reputation of hard-hitting, forceful, ingenious men. Already Boston was something more than a geographic fact—something of a state of mind. Now the solitary French boy was to become one of them.

Apollos Rivoire had left behind him the cruellest persecution the world up to his time had ever seen. After generations of religious tolerance, Catholic France had decided to purge herself of her well-to-do, well-behaved Protestant minority. This boy was but one of four hundred thousand to leave France in the eighteenth and latter part of the seventeenth centuries. . . .

The Huguenots went to the Lowlands, to England, Switzerland, America. France had opened her own veins and spilt her best blood when she drained herself of her Huguenots, and everywhere, in every country that would receive them, this amazing strain acted as yeast—even upon Boston. Apollos was not the first of these French refugees to arrive in the Puritan metropolis. The Faneuils, Jhon-nots, Sigourneys, and Bowdoins were already well-established and respected citizens. They fitted quickly into the Yankee pattern. The stories they could tell of persecution fanned the hatred the New Englanders already had for France and Catholicism. For generation after generation one of the ruling passions of the Boston people was their hatred and fear of their French Catholic neighbors—settled to their north, in Canada. And for generations the terrible French and Indian wars went on.

Apollos' father and mother, Isaac and Serenne, lived at Riaucaud, not far from Bordeaux. This was the very heart of Huguenot France and here the persecutions had been the most ferocious. It is a mild and sunny land of vineyards, and to this day one great vineyard bears the name Rivoire. . . .

Marquis James

The Rivoires were very well off for village people. ‘Apollos our son,’ Isaac Rivoire recorded, ‘was born the thirtieth day of November 1702, about ten o’clock at night and baptized at Riaucaud, France. Apollos Rivoire my brother was his God Father and Anne Maulnon my sister-in-law was his God Mother. He set out for Guernsey the 21st of November 1715.’

As there was no legal marriage, no baptism, no church, for the Protestants of France at the time, such a baptism would take place secretly with considerable risk of the galleys if discovered. Louis XIV died the year Apollos left home. He boasted on his deathbed that he had ended Protestantism forever in France. Many (perhaps Isaac Rivoire among them) became ‘new catholics,’ but practised their faith in secret. If too tired or too wedded to their comfortable stone house and beautiful vineyards to leave themselves, they often sent their children to other countries, beyond the reach of persecution. . . .

Apollos was not the first exile from this family. His father’s younger brother Simon had been apprenticed to a surgeon and had ‘fled away with his master.’ The surgeon and the boy went first to Holland, but by 1705 Simon was settled in Guernsey. It was to this uncle Apollos was first sent. Riaucaud is not far from Rochelle, the great port of exit for the émigrés, nor is it a long sail from Rochelle to Guernsey. The boy could hardly have realized that this departure was to be as final as death itself.

It was Uncle Simon who furnished the boy with money and put him on this ship which now carried not merely one more child refugee, but the generations that would come after him, bearing his metamorphosed name to greater fame even as it died to extinction in its own land.

His great transatlantic ship (possibly as large as three hundred tons) approached Long Wharf, which ran for two thousand feet out into the harbor. It was an amazing piece of engineering. The largest vessels in the world could come up to it at low tide. On the north side of the wharf were warehouses, auction halls, shops, and counting houses. The south was left open for the ships.

The crew tramped round and round the capstan, inching her in

A Boy Comes to Boston

by a dripping hawser. There was the roar of the captain's voice, the bo'sun's pipe, the iron clang of the catch pin, and the ship warps in. Porters in leather aprons, clerks with ledgers, come running. Fine, fat merchants in gold lace and great wigs, attended by black slaves, step out of their counting houses. Dogs bark, men gee and haw to oxen. Slatternly girls, watching from housetops, know a ship has arrived and hurry to the wharf, ready to make the usual fool of jack ashore.

Here is the rough vitality of a thriving port. And the smell of bread-baking and of rum, fish drying, tar, sewage, cordwainers' shops, dye pits, and yet, unmistakable even in winter-time, a smell of land, so sweet a smell after a month and more at sea.

It is hard at first to find one's legs on land after so long a time of heaving decks; terrifying to be alone in so alien a world. Will the captain, in all his bustle and importance, forget the least important of his passengers—only one more of these French children? Usually it was the captain who saw to the indenturing of servants and apprentices, and it had already been decided that Apollos Rivoire is to be apprenticed to a goldsmith. Thirty-two of them were earning their living in Boston at this time, Jeremiah Dummer, John Coney, the Sandersons, Winslow, Hurd, and Dixwell among them. Folk were growing rich and wanting the finest silver (for goldsmiths worked largely in silver) for their own adornment and for their churches and tables. There was no end to the opportunities open to a clever and willing boy, even if he did not yet speak English.

So he stands a moment on the great wharf, his bundle, that age-old symbol of the refugee, in his hand. He has not yet lost his sea legs nor gained his land ones. It makes a person cautious about the first step—even a little sick. He is still suspended between two worlds. Apollos Rivoire is no longer a French boy, nor is he yet an American.

II

Among the Boston silversmiths none was held in greater respect as citizen and craftsman than John Coney. Mr. Coney was at this time a man of sixty. He was known as a silent man, religious and

Marquis James

very modest. He abhorred idleness at any time and was ‘diligent in God’s work on Lord’s day even as in his own on other days.’ This sounds like a bleak household for an apprentice, but ‘he had pity for the poor and was a generous housekeeper.’ If he had faults, they were ‘only such as are consistent with a good estate and small in comparison of his virtues.’ Apollos would not fare too badly.

Mr. Coney signed for the French boy and took him to live with him on Anne Street, close to Dock Square. Here at Dock Square was the business centre of the town and the biggest of the public markets. It was held outdoors, for Peter Faneuil had not yet built Faneuil Hall. A town drain ran down the middle of the Square. There was a lively smell of dead fish as the tides slopped in and out of the yet unfilled Town Dock. Anne Street led out of this busy square, over the Mill Creek into North Boston, hugging the waterfront. After two blocks its name changed to Fish, which in a few minutes’ walk broadened into North Square, swung right, took another name, and continued.

Like so many men of his years and period, Mr. Coney was enjoying his third wife—‘Prudent Mary,’ Judge Sewall calls her. Although he had married early and late and had had twelve children in all, only five small girls had survived the horrifying and often fatal experience of infancy. Now Apollos would become one of this household. He too would be as ‘diligent’ as his master in serving God on Lord’s day at the new North Church, and work as hard on other days. Mr. Coney would clothe and feed him and teach him the ancient mysteries of the goldsmith. It would be many years before the boy would even earn his keep, but towards the end of his indenture he would be a very valuable piece of property. This would repay the master for the years he had disciplined, fed, and taught the urchin and got nothing back. For as skilled a trade as silversmith it was customary for the boy’s guardian to pay a considerable sum. It was Uncle Simon who furnished this money. . . .

Perhaps he did not send enough, or Mr. Coney may have merely been showing those faults so consistent with a good estate, for Apollos was not to serve the seven years which had been customary

A Boy Comes to Boston

since the earliest Middle Ages, but ten. For ten years he could incur no debt nor marry without his master's permission. He might seek no other employer nor set up for himself. In turn it was Mr. Coney's duty to see to it the boy not only learned his trade, but became a reputable citizen. For his good behavior he would give his bond to the town.

Now Apollos was no longer a refugee, but one more of those smart apprentices Boston was filled with, even as Nuremberg or London, Rome or Paris, had been filled for centuries. By this system they were studying everything from law and medicine to soap-boiling and tinkering.

The Boston boys wore leather aprons and mostly leather breeches cut so full that such as followed sedentary trades could wear them turned about, hind-side before, and not go through the seat too fast. They worked hours that would supposedly kill a modern boy and had often too much energy left over. They lied, seduced their masters' daughters, fell through the ice and drowned. They left careless fires and burned down bakeshops or overheated tar in the caboose of a ship and burned up the ship. They stole great wigs and silver spoons. They ran away and were whipped publicly and privately.

A man close to the period says it seems to have been the ambition of every apprentice 'to harass their masters as much as possible without getting flogged for it.' Saturday was a good day for mischief, for no pious master would desecrate the Sabbath by beating his apprentice and on Monday his temper might cool. One Boston cordwainer whose boys all turned out scoundrels said, in self-defence, 'he had beat them till he tired of it—humanity could do no more.' But there was little teaching without a whip in those days. It began in what we would call infant schools and went on as far as Harvard, where inebriated young gentlemen might feel the president's switch. However hard the system sometimes was on boys and masters, the art, craft, mystery, or trade was well served. No other method has turned out such good workmen. John Coney himself had once been apprenticed, probably either to Hull or Dummer, and they in turn had

Marquis James

served their masters and their masters, earlier masters, and so on back through the centuries.

If a boy did not show a natural aptitude, he might be returned to his parents. This weeding-out process at an early age must account in part for the high degree of ability in the grown workmen. Another apprentice, living close to Dock Square during Apollos' indenture, had first been tried out with a candle-maker and then with a cutler. It was not until Benjamin Franklin was apprenticed to a printer that he found his proper niche.

Apollos seems to have been docile and industrious. Doubtless he fitted into his master's family and shop happily—as did most of the boys, although the court records, newspapers, and diaries emphasize the unhappy ones. John and Mary Coney and their daughters would partly take the place of his own lost family. He would begin very humbly sweeping the shop, sifting the gold and silver dust from the débris, or feeding charcoal to the brick furnace. He might soon be allowed to stamp the tiny rabbit or cony which to this day marks his master's later period. It would be he who carried home the spurs Judge Sewall speaks of leaving for Mr. Coney to mend. His master, one of the finest craftsmen of his day, worked in a great period of the silversmiths. Many of the leading families of his time in Boston were his patrons and also many people of comparatively small means.

Fine silver was as safe an investment as a cautious man might make. There was no bank in Boston. The stock market was embryonic and shaky. Mercantile ventures (the principal source of local wealth) often cleaned out the investor; so in old stockings and mattresses silver coins were accumulated, English pounds, Spanish doubloons, Dutch rix-dollars. When there were enough, the silver was taken to the smith, beaten into cups, tankards, porringers, to form the principal reserve capital in thrifty households.

This custom was to bear bitter fruit, for specie was getting as rare as hens' teeth. The answer was to print paper money. Mr. Coney engraved the plates for the first paper currency in America. So, while with one hand he was melting up the scarce 'hard' money, with the other he was starting the New World off on unsound paper.

A Boy Comes to Boston

Apollos had a chance to observe the beginning of a process which, in his manhood, nearly wrecked one of the most prosperous English colonies.

At first it would be the boxes of gold and pearl beads his master used for the jewelry he made, or the tiny rabbit with which he signed his work, that would catch a child's interest. Nor could anyone resist the snarling lions set under an inkstand, or the dragon's snout for the spout of the chocolate pot, or the women's figures used as handles of a cup; but soon he would come to understand the grace and appealing simplicity of the superb craftsman's basic design. Nothing we know of Apollos' work reflects the glories of his master. It is the son after him—Paul Revere—who seems to have served a spiritual apprenticeship to John Coney.

KENNETH ROBERTS:

"I wish I had written

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

by MARK TWAIN"

While the mass of Mr. Roberts' readers unhesitatingly identify him with the succession of exceptional historical novels dating back from NORTHWEST PASSAGE and OLIVER WISWELL to RABBLE IN ARMS and ARUNDEL, still another group of his admirers know him as an essayist and humorist. In his choice of this delightful Mark Twain essay, Mr. Roberts, who knows well the proper use of the rules that Cooper shunned, has exercised the judgment of the novelist, essayist and humorist.

The Pathfinder and *The Deerslayer* stand at the head of Cooper's novels as artistic creations. There are others of his works which contain parts as perfect as are to be found in these, and scenes even more thrilling. Not one can be compared with either of them as a finished whole.

The defects in both of these tales are comparatively slight. They are pure works of art.—*Prof. Lounsbury.*

The five tales reveal an extraordinary fullness of invention.

. . . One of the very greatest characters in fiction, Natty Bumppo. . . .

The craft of the woodsman, the tricks of the trapper, all the delicate art of the forest, were familiar to Cooper from his youth up.—*Prof. Brander Matthews.*

Cooper is the greatest artist in the domain of romantic fiction yet produced by America.—*Wilkie Collins.*

From IN DEFENSE OF HARRIET SHELLEY AND OTHER ESSAYS, copyright, 1918, by The Mark Twain Company, copyright, 1946, by Clara Clemens Samossoud. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

IT SEEMS to me that it was far from right for the Professor of English Literature in Yale, the Professor of English Literature in Columbia, and Wilkie Collins to deliver opinions on Cooper's literature without having read some of it. It would have been much more decorous to keep silent and let persons talk who have read Cooper.

Cooper's art has some defects. In one place in *Deerslayer*, and in the restricted space of two-thirds of a page, Cooper has scored 114 offenses against literary art out of a possible 115. It breaks the record.

There are nineteen rules governing literary art in the domain of romantic fiction—some say twenty-two. In *Deerslayer* Cooper violated eighteen of them. These eighteen require:

1. That a tale shall accomplish something and arrive somewhere. But the *Deerslayer* tale accomplishes nothing and arrives in the air.
2. They require that the episodes of a tale shall be necessary parts of the tale, and shall help to develop it. But as the *Deerslayer* tale is not a tale, and accomplishes nothing and arrives nowhere, the episodes have no rightful place in the work, since there was nothing for them to develop.
3. They require that the personages in a tale shall be alive, except in the case of corpses, and that always the reader shall be able to tell the corpses from the others. But this detail has often been overlooked in the *Deerslayer* tale.
4. They require that the personages in a tale, both dead and alive, shall exhibit a sufficient excuse for being there. But this detail also has been overlooked in the *Deerslayer* tale.
5. They require that when the personages of a tale deal in conversation, the talk shall sound like human talk, and be talk such as human beings would be likely to talk in the given circumstances, and have a discoverable meaning, also a discoverable purpose, and a show of relevancy, and remain in the neighborhood of the subject in hand, and be interesting to the reader, and help out the tale, and stop when the people cannot think of anything more to say. But this requirement has been ignored from the beginning of the *Deerslayer* tale to the end of it.

Kenneth Roberts

6. They require that when the author describes the character of a personage in his tale, the conduct and conversation of that personage shall justify said description. But this law gets little or no attention in the *Deerslayer* tale, as Natty Bumppo's case will amply prove.

7. They require that when a personage talks like an illustrated, gilt-edged, tree-calf, hand-tooled, seven-dollar Friendship's Offering in the beginning of a paragraph, he shall not talk like a negro minstrel in the end of it. But this rule is flung down and danced upon in the *Deerslayer* tale.

8. They require that crass stupidities shall not be played upon the reader as "the craft of the woodsman, the delicate art of the forest," by either the author or the people in the tale. But this rule is persistently violated in the *Deerslayer* tale.

9. They require that the personages of a tale shall confine themselves to possibilities and let miracles alone; or, if they venture a miracle, the author must so plausibly set it forth as to make it look possible and reasonable. But these rules are not respected in the *Deerslayer* tale.

10. They require that the author shall make the reader feel a deep interest in the personages of his tale and in their fate; and that he shall make the reader love the good people and hate the bad ones. But the reader of the *Deerslayer* tale dislikes the good people in it, is indifferent to the others, and wishes they would all get drowned together.

11. They require that the characters in a tale shall be so clearly defined that the reader can tell beforehand what each will do in a given emergency. But in the *Deerslayer* tale this rule is vacated.

In addition to these large rules there are some little ones. These require that the author shall

12. Say what he is proposing to say, not merely come near it.
13. Use the right word, not its second cousin.
14. Eschew surplusage.
15. Not omit necessary details.
16. Avoid slovenliness of form.

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

17. Use good grammar.

18. Employ a simple and straightforward style.

Even these seven are coldly and persistently violated in the *Deer-slayer* tale.

Cooper's gift in the way of invention was not a rich endowment; but such as it was he liked to work it, he was pleased with the effects, and indeed he did some quite sweet things with it. In his little box of stage-properties he kept six or eight cunning devices, tricks, artifices for his savages and woodsmen to deceive and circumvent each other with, and he was never so happy as when he was working these innocent things and seeing them go. A favorite one was to make a moccasined person tread in the tracks of the moccasined enemy, and thus hide his own trail. Cooper wore out barrels and barrels of moccasins in working that trick. Another stage-property that he pulled out of his box pretty frequently was his broken twig. He prized his broken twig above all the rest of his effects, and worked it the hardest. It is a restful chapter in any book of his when somebody doesn't step on a dry twig and alarm all the reds and whites for two hundred yards around. Every time a Cooper person is in peril, and absolute silence is worth four dollars a minute, he is sure to step on a dry twig. There may be a hundred handier things to step on, but that wouldn't satisfy Cooper. Cooper requires him to turn out and find a dry twig; and if he can't do it, go and borrow one. In fact, the Leatherstocking Series ought to have been called the Broken Twig Series.

I am sorry there is not room to put in a few dozen instances of the delicate art of the forest, as practised by Natty Bumppo and some of the other Cooperian experts. Perhaps we may venture two or three samples. Cooper was a sailor—a naval officer; yet he gravely tells us how a vessel, driving toward a lee shore in a gale, is steered for a particular spot by her skipper because he knows of an *undertow* there which will hold her back against the gale and save her. For just pure woodcraft, or sailorcraft, or whatever it is, isn't that neat? For several years Cooper was daily in the society of artillery, and he ought to have noticed that when a cannon-ball strikes the ground it either buries itself or skips a hundred feet or so; skips again a hundred feet

Kenneth Roberts

or so—and so on, till finally it gets tired and rolls. Now in one place he loses some “females”—as he always calls women—in the edge of a wood near a plain at night in a fog, on purpose to give Bumppo a chance to show off the delicate art of the forest before the reader. These mislaid people are hunting for a fort. They hear a cannon-blast, and a cannon-ball presently comes rolling into the wood and stops at their feet. To the females this suggests nothing. The case is very different with the admirable Bumppo. I wish I may never know peace again if he doesn’t strike out promptly and *follow the track* of that cannon-ball across the plain through the dense fog and find the fort. Isn’t it a daisy? If Cooper had any real knowledge of Nature’s ways of doing things, he had a most delicate art in concealing the fact. For instance: one of his acute Indian experts, Chingachgook (pronounced Chicago, I think), has lost the trail of a person he is tracking through the forest. Apparently that trail is hopelessly lost. Neither you nor I could ever have guessed out the way to find it. It was very different with Chicago. Chicago was not stumped for long. He turned a running stream out of its course, and there, in the slush in its old bed, were that person’s moccasin tracks. The current did not wash them away, as it would have done in all other like cases—no, even the eternal laws of Nature have to vacate when Cooper wants to put up a delicate job of woodcraft on the reader.

We must be a little wary when Brander Matthews tells us that Cooper’s books “reveal an extraordinary fullness of invention.” As a rule, I am quite willing to accept Brander Matthews’s literary judgments and applaud his lucid and graceful phrasing of them: but that particular statement needs to be taken with a few tons of salt. Bless your heart, Cooper hadn’t any more invention than a horse; and I don’t mean a high-class horse, either; I mean a clothes-horse. It would be very difficult to find a really clever “situation” in Cooper’s books, and still more difficult to find one of any kind which he has failed to render absurd by his handling of it. Look at the episodes of “the caves”; and at the celebrated scuffle between Magua and those others on the table-land a few days later; and at Hurry Harry’s queer water-transit from the castle to the ark; and at Deerslayer’s

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

half-hour with his first corpse; and at the quarrel between Hurry Harry and Deerslayer later; and at—but choose for yourself; you can't go amiss.

If Cooper had been an observer his inventive faculty would have worked better; not more interestingly, but more rationally, more plausibly. Cooper's proudest creations in the way of "situations" suffer noticeably from the absence of the observer's protecting gift. Cooper's eye was splendidly inaccurate. Cooper seldom saw anything correctly. He saw nearly all things as through a glass eye, darkly. Of course a man who cannot see the commonest little every-day matters accurately is working at a disadvantage when he is constructing a "situation." In the *Deerslayer* tale Cooper has a stream which is fifty feet wide where it flows out of a lake; it presently narrows to twenty as it meanders along for no given reason, and yet when a stream acts like that it ought to be required to explain itself. Fourteen pages later the width of the brook's outlet from the lake has suddenly shrunk thirty feet, and become "the narrowest part of the stream." This shrinkage is not accounted for. The stream has bends in it, a sure indication that it has alluvial banks and cuts them; yet these bends are only thirty and fifty feet long. If Cooper had been a nice and punctilious observer he would have noticed that the bends were oftener nine hundred feet long than short of it.

Cooper made the exit of that stream fifty feet wide, in the first place, for no particular reason; in the second place, he narrowed it to less than twenty to accommodate some Indians. He bends a "sapling" to the form of an arch over this narrow passage, and conceals six Indians in its foliage. They are "laying" for a settler's scow or ark which is coming up the stream on its way to the lake; it is being hauled against the stiff current by a rope whose stationary end is anchored in the lake; its rate of progress cannot be more than a mile an hour. Cooper describes the ark, but pretty obscurely. In the matter of dimensions "it was little more than a modern canal-boat." Let us guess, then, that it was about one hundred and forty feet long. It was of "greater breadth than common." Let us guess, then, that it was about sixteen feet wide. This leviathan had been prowling

Kenneth Roberts

down bends which were but a third as long as itself, and scraping between banks where it had only two feet of space to spare on each side. We cannot too much admire this miracle. A low-roofed log dwelling occupies “two-thirds of the ark’s length”—a dwelling ninety feet long and sixteen feet wide, let us say—a kind of vestibule train. The dwelling has two rooms—each forty-five feet long and sixteen feet wide, let us guess. One of them is the bedroom of the Hutter girls, Judith and Hetty; the other is the parlor in the daytime, at night it is papa’s bedchamber. The ark is arriving at the stream’s exit now, whose width has been reduced to less than twenty feet to accommodate the Indians—say to eighteen. There is a foot to spare on each side of the boat. Did the Indians notice that there was going to be a tight squeeze there? Did they notice that they could make money by climbing down out of that arched sapling and just stepping aboard when the ark scraped by? No, other Indians would have noticed these things, but Cooper’s Indians never notice anything. Cooper thinks they are marvelous creatures for noticing, but he was almost always in error about his Indians. There was seldom a sane one among them.

The ark is one hundred and forty feet long; the dwelling is ninety feet long. The idea of the Indians is to drop softly and secretly from the arched sapling to the dwelling as the ark creeps along under it at the rate of a mile an hour, and butcher the family. It will take the ark a minute and a half to pass under. It will take the ninety-foot dwelling a minute to pass under. Now, then, what did the six Indians do? It would take you thirty years to guess, and even then you would have to give it up, I believe. Therefore, I will tell you what the Indians did. Their chief, a person of quite extraordinary intellect for a Cooper Indian, warily watched the canal-boat as it squeezed along under him, and when he had got his calculations fined down to exactly the right shade, as he judged, he let go and dropped. And *missed the house!* That is actually what he did. He missed the house, and landed in the stern of the scow. It was not much of a fall, yet it knocked him silly. He lay there unconscious. If the house had been ninety-seven feet long he would have made

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

the trip. The fault was Cooper's, not his. The error lay in the construction of the house. Cooper was no architect.

There still remained in the roost five Indians. The boat has passed under and is now out of their reach. Let me explain what the five did—you would not be able to reason it out for yourself. No. 1 jumped for the boat, but fell in the water astern of it. Then No. 2 jumped for the boat, but fell in the water still farther astern of it. Then No. 3 jumped for the boat, and fell a good way astern of it. Then No. 4 jumped for the boat, and fell in the water *away* astern. Then even No. 5 made a jump for the boat—for he was a Cooper Indian. In the matter of intellect, the difference between a Cooper Indian and the Indian that stands in front of the cigar-shop is not spacious. The scow episode is really a sublime burst of invention; but it does not thrill, because the inaccuracy of the details throws a sort of air of fictitiousness and general improbability over it. This comes of Cooper's inadequacy as an observer.

The reader will find some examples of Cooper's high talent for inaccurate observation in the account of the shooting-match in *The Pathfinder*.

A common wrought nail was driven lightly into the target, its head having been first touched with paint.

The color of the paint is not stated—an important omission, but Cooper deals freely in important omissions. No, after all, it was not an important omission; for this nail-head is a *hundred yards* from the marksmen, and could not be seen by them at that distance, no matter what its color might be. How far can the best eyes see a common house-fly? A hundred yards? It is quite impossible. Very well; eyes that cannot see a house-fly that is a hundred yards away cannot see an ordinary nail-head at that distance, for the size of the two objects is the same. It takes a keen eye to see a fly or a nail-head at fifty yards—one hundred and fifty feet. Can the reader do it?

The nail was lightly driven, its head painted, and game called. Then the Cooper miracles began. The bullet of the first marksman chipped an edge of the nail-head; the next man's bullet drove the

Kenneth Roberts

nail a little way into the target—and removed all the paint. Haven't the miracles gone far enough now? Not to suit Cooper; for the purpose of this whole scheme is to show off his prodigy, Deerslayer-Hawkeye-Long Rifle-Leatherstocking-Pathfinder-Bumppo before the ladies.

"Be all ready to clench it, boys!" cried out Pathfinder, stepping into his friend's tracks the instant they were vacant. "Never mind a new nail; I can see that, though the paint is gone, and what I can see I can hit at a hundred yards, though it were only a mosquito's eye. Be ready to clench!"

The rifle cracked, the bullet sped its way, and the head of the nail was buried in the wood, covered by the piece of flattened lead.

There, you see, is a man who could hunt flies with a rifle, and command a ducal salary in a Wild West show to-day if we had him back with us.

The recorded feat is certainly surprising just as it stands; but it is not surprising enough for Cooper. Cooper adds a touch. He has made Pathfinder do this miracle with another man's rifle; and not only that, but Pathfinder did not have even the advantage of loading it himself. He had everything against him, and yet he made that impossible shot; and not only made it, but did it with absolute confidence, saying, "Be ready to clench." Now a person like that would have undertaken that same feat with a brickbat, and with Cooper to help he would have achieved it, too.

Pathfinder showed off handsomely that day before the ladies. His very first feat was a thing which no Wild West show can touch. He was standing with the group of marksmen, observing—a hundred yards from the target, mind; one Jasper raised his rifle and drove the center of the bull's-eye. Then the Quartermaster fired. The target exhibited no result this time. There was a laugh. "It's a dead miss," said Major Lundie. Pathfinder waited an impressive moment or two; then said, in that calm, indifferent, know-it-all way of his, "No, Major, he has covered Jasper's bullet, as will be seen if any one will take the trouble to examine the target."

Wasn't it remarkable! How *could* he see that little pellet fly

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

through the air and enter that distant bullet-hole? Yet that is what he did; for nothing is impossible to a Cooper person. Did any of those people have any deep-seated doubts about this thing? No; for that would imply sanity, and these were all Cooper people.

The respect for Pathfinder's skill and for his *quickness and accuracy of sight* [the italics are mine] was so profound and general, that the instant he made this declaration the spectators began to distrust their own opinions, and a dozen rushed to the target to ascertain the fact. There, sure enough, it was found that the Quartermaster's bullet had gone through the hole made by Jasper's, and that, too, so accurately as to require a minute examination to be certain of the circumstance, which, however, was soon clearly established by discovering one bullet over the other in the stump against which the target was placed.

They made a "minute" examination; but never mind, how could they know that there were two bullets in that hole without digging the latest one out? for neither probe nor eyesight could prove the presence of any more than one bullet. Did they dig? No; as we shall see. It is the Pathfinder's turn now; as he steps out before the ladies, takes aim, and fires.

But, alas! here is a disappointment; an incredible, an unimaginable disappointment—for the target's aspect is unchanged; there is nothing there but that same old bullet-hole!

"If one dared to hint at such a thing," cried Major Duncan, "I should say that the Pathfinder has also missed the target!"

As nobody had missed it yet, the "also" was not necessary; but never mind about that, for the Pathfinder is going to speak.

"No, no, Major," said he, confidently, "that *would* be a risky declaration. I didn't load the piece, and can't say what was in it; but if it was lead, you will find the bullet driving down those of the Quartermaster and Jasper, else is not my name Pathfinder."

A shout from the target announced the truth of this assertion.

Is the miracle sufficient as it stands? Not for Cooper. The Pathfinder speaks again, as he "now slowly advances toward the stage occupied by the females":

Kenneth Roberts

"That's not all, boys, that's not all; if you find the target touched at all, I'll own to a miss. The Quartermaster cut the wood, but you'll find no wood cut by that last messenger."

The miracle is at last complete. He knew—doubtless *saw*—at the distance of a hundred yards—that his bullet had passed into the hole *without fraying the edges*. There were now three bullets in that one hole—three bullets embedded processionaly in the body of the stump back of the target. Everybody knew this—somehow or other—and yet nobody had dug any of them out to make sure. Cooper is not a close observer, but he is interesting. He is certainly always that, no matter what happens. And he is more interesting when he is not noticing what he is about than when he is. This is a considerable merit.

The conversations in the Cooper books have a curious sound in our modern ears. To believe that such talk really ever came out of people's mouths would be to believe that there was a time when time was of no value to a person who thought he had something to say; when it was the custom to spread a two-minute remark out to ten; when a man's mouth was a rolling-mill, and busied itself all day long in turning four-foot pigs of thought into thirty-foot bars of conversational railroad iron by attenuation; when subjects were seldom faithfully stuck to, but talk wandered all around and arrived nowhere; when conversations consisted mainly of irrelevancies, with here and there a relevancy, a relevancy with an embarrassed look, as not being able to explain how it got there.

Cooper was certainly not a master in the construction of dialogue. Inaccurate observation defeated him here as it defeated him in so many other enterprises of his. He even failed to notice that the man who talks corrupt English six days in the week must and will talk it on the seventh, and can't help himself. In the *Deerslayer* story he lets Deerslayer talk the showiest kind of book-talk sometimes, and at other times the basest of base dialects. For instance, when some one asks him if he has a sweetheart, and if so, where she abides, this is his majestic answer:

"She's in the forest—hanging from the boughs of the trees, in a soft rain—in the dew on the open grass—the clouds that float about in the

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

blue heavens—the birds that sing in the wood—the sweet springs where I slake my thirst—and in all the other glorious gifts that come from God's Providence!"

And he preceded that, a little before, with this:

"It consarns me as all things that touches a fri'nd consarns a fri'nd."

And this is another of his remarks:

"If I was Injin born, now, I might tell of this, or carry in the scalp and boast of the expl'ite afore the whole tribe; or if my inimy had only been a bear"—[and so on].

We cannot imagine such a thing as a veteran Scotch Commander-in-Chief comporting himself in the field like a windy melodramatic actor, but Cooper could. On one occasion Alice and Cora were being chased by the French through a fog in the neighborhood of their father's fort:

"*Point de quartier aux coquins!*" cried an eager pursuer, who seemed to direct the operations of the enemy.

"Stand firm and be ready, my gallant 60ths!" suddenly exclaimed a voice above them, "wait to see the enemy; fire low, and sweep the glacis."

"Father! father!" exclaimed a piercing cry from out the mist; "it is I! Alice! thy own Elsie! spare, O! save your daughters!"

"Hold!" shouted the former speaker, in the awful tones of parental agony, the sound reaching even to the woods, and rolling back in solemn echo. "'Tis she! God has restored me my children! Throw open the sally-port; to the field, 60ths, to the field! pull not a trigger, lest ye kill my lambs! Drive off these dogs of France with your steel!"

Cooper's word-sense was singularly dull. When a person has a poor ear for music he will flat and sharp right along without knowing it. He keeps near the tune, but it is *not* the tune. When a person has a poor ear for words, the result is a literary flattening and sharpening; you perceive what he is intending to say, but you also perceive that he doesn't *say* it. This is Cooper. He was not a word-musician. His ear was satisfied with the *approximate* word. I will furnish some circumstantial evidence in support of this charge. My instances are

Kenneth Roberts

gathered from half a dozen pages of the tale called *Deerslayer*. He uses "verbal" for "oral"; "precision" for "facility"; "phenomena" for "marvels"; "necessary" for "predetermined"; "unsophisticated" for "primitive"; "preparation" for "expectancy"; "rebuked" for "subdued"; "dependent on" for "resulting from"; "fact" for "condition"; "fact" for "conjecture"; "precaution" for "caution"; "explain" for "determine"; "mortified" for "disappointed"; "meretricious" for "factitious"; "materially" for "considerably"; "decreasing" for "deepening"; "increasing" for "disappearing"; "embedded" for "inclosed"; "treacherous" for "hostile"; "stood" for "stooped"; "softened" for "replaced"; "rejoined" for "remarked"; "situation" for "condition"; "different" for "differing"; "insensible" for "un-sentient"; "brevity" for "celerity"; "distrusted" for "suspicious"; "mental imbecility" for "imbecility"; "eyes" for "sight"; "counter-acting" for "opposing"; "funeral obsequies" for "obsequies."

There have been daring people in the world who claimed that Cooper could write English, but they are all dead now—all dead but Lounsbury. I don't remember that Lounsbury makes the claim in so many words, still he makes it, for he says that *Deerslayer* is a "pure work of art." Pure, in that connection, means faultless—faultless in all details—and language is a detail. If Mr. Lounsbury had only compared Cooper's English with the English which he writes himself—but it is plain that he didn't; and so it is likely that he imagines until this day that Cooper's is as clean and compact as his own. Now I feel sure, deep down in my heart, that Cooper wrote about the poorest English that exists in our language, and that the English of *Deerslayer* is the very worst that even Cooper ever wrote.

I may be mistaken, but it does seem to me that *Deerslayer* is not a work of art in any sense; it does seem to me that it is destitute of every detail that goes to the making of a work of art; in truth, it seems to me that *Deerslayer* is just simply a literary *delirium tremens*.

A work of art? It has no invention; it has no order, system, sequence, or result; it has no life-likeness, no thrill, no stir, no seeming of reality; its characters are confusedly drawn, and by their acts and words they prove that they are not the sort of people the author

Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses

claims that they are; its humor is pathetic; its pathos is funny; its conversations are—oh! indescribable; its love-scenes odious; its English a crime against the language.

Counting these out, what is left is Art. I think we must all admit that.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN:

*"I wish I had written
I Want to Know Why"*

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON"

While the renown of Morley Callaghan rests on both novels and short stories, it is primarily as a writer of the latter that he is best known. His stories have frequently received especial honors as being among the best produced in America. The author of "They Shall Inherit the Earth" and "Now That April's Here" says of his selection, "If you can't forget a story that's really all you need say about it. You can't ask much more of any story. I read "I Want to Know Why" years ago when I was at college. At the time I liked it. It made me want to write, but I never realized how profound an impression it had made on me, or how true and memorable a story it really was until I found years later that I was encountering the truth of the story among children and adults again and again.

"Of course, there is a fresh native flavor in the writing of the story. The artless touch is there, though it is free from that heavy naïveté that sometimes got into Anderson's work. In an easy natural way Anderson saw into the problem that fascinates every boy growing into the world—the contrast between all the fine things that are suggested by one aspect of a man's behavior, and the cheap sloppy things he turns to and which are unworthy of him, but which are also a part of his behavior. If you could tell the answer to the boy who wants to know why, you could tell the story of the human race."

WE GOT up at four in the morning, that first day in the east. On the evening before we had climbed off a freight train at the edge of town, and with the true instinct of Kentucky boys had found our way across town and to the race track and the stables at once.

From THE TRIUMPH OF THE EGG. Copyright, 1921, by Eleanor Anderson, reprinted by permission of Eleanor Anderson.

I Want to Know Why

Then we knew we were all right. Hanley Turner right away found a nigger we knew. It was Bildad Johnson who in the winter works at Ed Becker's livery barn in our home town, Beckersville. Bildad is a good cook as almost all our niggers are and of course he, like everyone in our part of Kentucky who is anyone at all, likes the horses. In the spring Bildad begins to scratch around. A nigger from our country can flatter and wheedle anyone into letting him do most anything he wants. Bildad wheedles the stable men and the trainers from the horse farms in our country around Lexington. The trainers come into town in the evening to stand around and talk and maybe get into a poker game. Bildad gets in with them. He is always doing little favors and telling about things to eat, chicken browned in a pan, and how is the best way to cook sweet potatoes and corn bread. It makes your mouth water to hear him. When the racing season comes on and the horses go to the races and there is all the talk on the streets in the evenings about the new colts, and everyone says when they are going over to Lexington, or to the spring meeting at Churchill Downs or to Latonia, and the horsemen that have been down to New Orleans or maybe at the winter meeting at Havana in Cuba come home to spend a week before they start out again, at such a time when everything talked about in Beckersville is just horses and nothing else and the outfits start out and horse racing is in every breath of air you breathe, Bildad shows up with a job as cook for some outfit. Often when I think about it, his always going all season to the races and working in the livery barn in the winter where horses are and where men like to come and talk about horses, I wish I was a nigger. It's a foolish thing to say, but that's the way I am about being around horses, just crazy. I can't help it.

Well, I must tell you about what we did and let you in on what I'm talking about. Four of us boys from Beckersville, all whites and sons of men who live in Beckersville regular, made up our minds we were going to the races, not just to Lexington or Louisville, I don't mean, but to the big eastern track we were always hearing our Beckersville men talk about, to Saratoga. We were all pretty young then. I was just turned fifteen and I was the oldest of the four. It was my

Morley Callaghan

scheme. I admit that and I talked the others into trying it. There was Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton and myself. I had thirty-seven dollars I had earned during the winter working nights and Saturdays in Enoch Myer's grocery. Henry Rieback had eleven dollars and the others, Hanley and Tom, had only a dollar or two each. We fixed it all up and laid low until the Kentucky spring meetings were over and some of our men, the sportiest ones, the ones we envied the most, had cut out—then we cut out too.

I won't tell you the trouble we had beating our way on freights and all. We went through Cleveland and Buffalo and other cities and saw Niagara Falls. We bought things there, souvenirs and spoons and cards and shells with pictures of the falls on them for our sisters and mothers, but thought we had better not send any of the things home. We didn't want to put the folks on our trail and maybe be nabbed.

We got into Saratoga as I said at night and went to the track. Bildad fed us up. He showed us a place to sleep in hay over a shed and promised to keep still. Niggers are all right about things like that. They won't squeal on you. Often a white man you might meet, when you had run away from home like that, might appear to be all right and give you a quarter or a half dollar or something, and then go right and give you away. White men will do that, but not a nigger. You can trust them. They are squarer with kids. I don't know why.

At the Saratoga meeting that year there were a lot of men from home. Dave Williams and Arthur Mulford and Jerry Myers and others. Then there was a lot from Louisville and Lexington Henry Rieback knew but I didn't. They were professional gamblers and Henry Rieback's father is one too. He is what is called a sheet writer and goes away most of the year to tracks. In the winter when he is home in Beckersville he don't stay there much but goes away to cities and deals faro. He is a nice man and generous, is always sending Henry presents, a bicycle and a gold watch and a boy scout suit of clothes and things like that.

My own father is a lawyer. He's all right, but don't make much money and can't buy me things and anyway I'm getting so old now I don't expect it. He never said nothing to me against Henry, but

I Want to Know Why

Hanley Turner and Tom Tumberton's fathers did. They said to their boys that money so come by is no good and they didn't want their boys brought up to hear gamblers' talk and be thinking about such things and maybe embrace them.

That's all right and I guess the men know what they are talking about, but I don't see what it's got to do with Henry or with horses either. That's what I'm writing this story about. I'm puzzled. I'm getting to be a man and want to think straight and be O.K., and there's something I saw at the race meeting at the eastern track I can't figure out.

I can't help it, I'm crazy about thoroughbred horses. I've always been that way. When I was ten years old and saw I was going to be big and couldn't be a rider I was so sorry I nearly died. Harry Hellinfinger in Beckersville, whose father is Postmaster, is grown up and too lazy to work, but likes to stand around in the street and get up jokes on boys like sending them to a hardware store for a gimlet to bore square holes and other jokes like that. He played one on me. He told me that if I would eat a half a cigar I would be stunted and not grow any more and maybe could be a rider. I did it. When father wasn't looking I took a cigar out of his pocket and gagged it down some way. It made me awful sick and the doctor had to be sent for, and then it did no good. I kept right on growing. It was a joke. When I told what I had done and why most fathers would have whipped me but mine didn't.

Well, I didn't get stunted and didn't die. It serves Harry Hellinfinger right. Then I made up my mind I would like to be a stable boy, but had to give that up too. Mostly niggers do that work and I knew father wouldn't let me go into it. No use to ask him.

If you've never been crazy about thoroughbreds it's because you've never been around where they are much and don't know any better. They're beautiful. There isn't anything so lovely and clean and full of spunk and honest and everything as some race horses. On the big horse farms that are all around our town Beckersville there are tracks and the horses run in the early morning. More than a thousand times I've got out of bed before daylight and walked two or three

Morley Callaghan

miles to the tracks. Mother wouldn't of let me go but father always says, "Let him alone." So I got some bread out of the bread box and some butter and jam, gobbled it and lit out.

At the tracks you sit on the fence with men, whites and niggers, and they chew tobacco and talk, and then the colts are brought out. It's early and the grass is covered with shiny dew and in another field a man is plowing and they are frying things in a shed where the track niggers sleep, and you know how a nigger can giggle and laugh, and say things that make you laugh. A white man can't do it and some niggers can't but a track nigger can every time.

And so the colts are brought out and some are just galloped by stable boys, but almost every morning on a big track owned by a rich man who lives maybe in New York, there are always, nearly every morning, a few colts and some of the old race horses and geldings and mares that are cut loose.

It brings a lump up into my throat when a horse runs. I don't mean all horses but some. I can pick them nearly every time. It's in my blood like in the blood of race track niggers and trainers. Even when they just go slop-jogging along with a little nigger on their backs I can tell a winner. If my throat hurts and it's hard for me to swallow, that's him. He'll run like Sam Hill when you let him out. If he don't win every time it'll be a wonder and because they've got him in a pocket behind another or he was pulled or got off bad at the post or something. If I wanted to be a gambler like Henry Rieback's father I could get rich. I know I could and Henry says so too. All I would have to do is to wait 'til that hurt comes when I see a horse and then bet every cent. That's what I would do if I wanted to be a gambler, but I don't.

When you're at the tracks in the morning—not the race tracks but the training tracks around Beckersville—you don't see a horse, the kind I've been talking about, very often, but it's nice anyway. Any thoroughbred, that is sired right and out of a good mare and trained by a man that knows how, can run. If he couldn't what would he be there for and not pulling a plow?

Well, out of the stables they come and the boys are on their backs

I Want to Know Why

and it's lovely to be there. You hunch down on top of the fence and itch inside you. Over in the sheds the niggers giggle and sing. Bacon is being fried and coffee made. Everything smells lovely. Nothing smells better than coffee and manure and horses and niggers and bacon frying and pipes being smoked out of doors on a morning like that. It just gets you, that's what it does.

But about Saratoga. We was there six days and not a soul from home seen us and everything came off just as we wanted it to, fine weather and horses and races and all. We beat our way home and Bildad gave us a basket with fried chicken and bread and other eatables in, and I had eighteen dollars when we got back to Beckersville. Mother jawed and cried but Pop didn't say much. I told everything we done except one thing. I did and saw that alone. That's what I'm writing about. It got me upset. I think about it at night. Here it is.

At Saratoga we laid up nights in the hay in the shed Bildad had showed us and ate with the niggers early and at night when the race people had all gone away. The men from home stayed mostly in the grandstand and betting field, and didn't come out around the places where the horses are kept except to the paddocks just before a race when the horses are saddled. At Saratoga they don't have paddocks under an open shed as at Lexington and Churchill Downs and other tracks down in our country, but saddle the horses right out in an open place under trees on a lawn as smooth and nice as Bunker Bohon's front yard here in Beckersville. It's lovely. The horses are sweaty and nervous and shine and the men come out and smoke cigars and look at them and the trainers are there and the owners, and your heart thumps so you can hardly breathe.

Then the bugle blows for post and the boys that ride come running out with their silk clothes on and you run to get a place by the fence with the niggers.

I always am wanting to be a trainer or owner, and at the risk of being seen and caught and sent home I went to the paddocks before every race. The other boys didn't but I did.

We got to Saratoga on a Friday and on Wednesday the next week the big Mullford Handicap was to be run. Middlestride was in it

Morley Callaghan

and Sunstreak. The weather was fine and the track fast. I couldn't sleep the night before.

What had happened was that both these horses are the kind it makes my throat hurt to see. Middlestride is long and looks awkward and is a gelding. He belongs to Joe Thompson, a little owner from home who only has a half dozen horses. The Mullford Handicap is for a mile and Middlestride can't untrack fast. He goes away slow and is always way back at the half, then he begins to run and if the race is a mile and a quarter he'll just eat up everything and get there.

Sunstreak is different. He is a stallion and nervous and belongs on the biggest farm we've got in our country, the Van Riddle place that belongs to Mr. Van Riddle of New York. Sunstreak is like a girl you think about sometimes but never see. He is hard all over and lovely too. When you look at his head you want to kiss him. He is trained by Jerry Tillford who knows me and has been good to me lots of times, lets me walk into a horse's stall to look at him close and other things. There isn't anything as sweet as that horse. He stands at the post quiet and not letting on, but he is just burning up inside. Then when the barrier goes up he is off like his name, Sunstreak. It makes you ache to see him. It hurts you. He just lays down and runs like a bird dog. There can't anything I ever see run like him except Middlestride when he gets untracked and stretches himself.

Gee! I ached to see that race and those two horses run, ached and dreaded it too. I didn't want to see either of our horses beaten. We had never sent a pair like that to the races before. Old men in Beckersville said so and the niggers said so. It was a fact.

Before the race I went over to the paddocks to see. I looked a last look at Middlestride, who isn't such a much standing in a paddock that way, then I went to see Sunstreak.

It was his day. I knew when I see him. I forgot all about being seen myself and walked right up. All the men from Beckersville were there and no one noticed me except Jerry Tillford. He saw me and something happened. I'll tell you about that.

I was standing looking at that horse and aching. In some way, I can't tell how, I knew just how Sunstreak felt inside. He was quiet

I Want to Know Why

and letting the niggers rub his legs and Mr. Van Riddle himself put the saddle on, but he was just a raging torrent inside. He was like the water in the river at Niagara Falls just before it goes plunk down. That horse wasn't thinking about running. He don't have to think about that. He was just thinking about holding himself back 'til the time for the running came. I knew that. I could just in a way see right inside him. He was going to do some awful running and I knew it. He wasn't bragging or letting on much or prancing or making a fuss, but just waiting. I knew it and Jerry Tillford his trainer knew. I looked up and then that man and I looked into each other's eyes. Something happened to me. I guess I loved the man as much as I did the horse because he knew what I knew. Seemed to me there wasn't anything in the world but that man and the horse and me. I cried and Jerry Tillford had a shine in his eyes. Then I came away to the fence to wait for the race. The horse was better than me, more steadier, and now I know better than Jerry. He was the quietest and he had to do the running.

Sunstreak ran first of course and he busted the world's record for a mile. I've seen that if I never see anything more. Everything came out just as I expected. Middlestride got left at the post and was way back and closed up to be second, just as I knew he would. He'll get a world's record too some day. They can't skin the Beckersville country on horses.

I watched the race calm because I knew that would happen. I was sure. Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton were all more excited than me.

A funny thing had happened to me. I was thinking about Jerry Tillford the trainer and how happy he was all through the race. I liked him that afternoon even more than I ever liked my own father. I almost forgot the horses thinking that way about him. It was because of what I had seen in his eyes as he stood in the paddocks beside Sunstreak before the race started. I knew he had been watching and working with Sunstreak since the horse was a baby colt, had taught him to run and be patient and when to let himself out and not to quit, never. I knew that for him it was like a mother seeing her

Morley Callaghan

child do something brave or wonderful. It was the first time I ever felt for a man like that.

After the race that night I cut out from Tom and Hanley and Henry. I wanted to be by myself and I wanted to be near Jerry Tillford if I could work it. Here is what happened.

The track in Saratoga is near the edge of town. It is all polished up and trees around, the evergreen kind, and grass and everything painted and nice. If you go past the track you get to a hard road made of asphalt for automobiles, and if you go along this for a few miles there is a road turns off to a little rummy-looking farm house set in a yard.

That night after the race I went along that road because I had seen Jerry and some other men go that way in an automobile. I didn't expect to find them. I walked for a ways and then sat down by a fence to think. It was the direction they went in. I wanted to be as near Jerry as I could. I felt close to him. Pretty soon I went up the side road—I don't know why—and came to the rummy farm house. I was just lonesome to see Jerry, like wanting to see your father at night when you were a young kid. Just then an automobile came along and turned in. Jerry was in it and Henry Rieback's father, and Arthur Bedford from home, and Dave Williams and two other men I didn't know. They got out of the car and went into the house, all but Henry Rieback's father who quarrelled with them and said he wouldn't go. It was only about nine o'clock, but they were all drunk and the rummy-looking farm house was a place for bad women to stay in. That's what it was. I crept up along a fence and looked through a window and saw.

It's what gives me the fantods. I can't make it out. The women in the house were all ugly mean-looking women, not nice to look at or be near. They were homely too, except one who was tall and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, but with a hard ugly mouth. She had red hair. I saw everything plain. I got up by an old rose bush by an open window and looked. The women had on loose dresses and sat around in chairs. The men came in and some sat on the women's laps. The place smelled rotten

I Want to Know Why

and there was rotten talk, the kind a kid hears around a livery stable in a town like Beckersville in the winter but don't ever expect to hear talked when there are women around. It was rotten. A nigger wouldn't go into such a place.

I looked at Jerry Tillford. I've told you how I had been feeling about him on account of his knowing what was going on inside of Sunstreak in the minute before he went to the post for the race in which he made a world's record.

Jerry bragged in that bad woman house as I know Sunstreak wouldn't never have bragged. He said that he made that horse, that it was him that won the race and made the record. He lied and bragged like a fool. I never heard such silly talk.

And then, what do you suppose he did! He looked at the woman in there, the one that was lean and hard-mouthed and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, and his eyes began to shine just as they did when he looked at me and at Sunstreak in the paddocks at the track in the afternoon. I stood there by the window—gee!—but I wished I hadn't gone away from the tracks, but had stayed with the boys and the niggers and the horses. The tall rotten-looking woman was between us just as Sunstreak was in the paddocks in the afternoon.

Then, all of a sudden, I began to hate that man. I wanted to scream and rush in the room and kill him. I never had such a feeling before. I was so mad clean through that I cried and my fists were doubled up so my finger nails cut my hands.

And Jerry's eyes kept shining and he waved back and forth, and then he went and kissed that woman and I crept away and went back to the tracks and to bed and didn't sleep hardly any, and then next day I got the other kids to start home with me and never told them anything I seen.

I been thinking about it ever since. I can't make it out. Spring has come again and I'm nearly sixteen and go to the tracks mornings same as always, and I see Sunstreak and Middlestride and a new colt named Strident I'll bet will lay them all out, but no one thinks so but me and two or three niggers.

Morley Callaghan

But things are different. At the tracks the air don't taste as good or smell as good. It's because a man like Jerry Tillford, who knows what he does, could see a horse like Sunstreak run, and kiss a woman like that the same day. I can't make it out. Darn him, what did he want to do like that for? I keep thinking about it and it spoils looking at horses and smelling things and hearing niggers laugh and everything. Sometimes I'm so mad about it I want to fight someone. It gives me the fantods. What did he do it for? I want to know why.

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER:

"I wish I had written

La Virginie

from THE POWER HOUSE

by ALEX COMFORT"

As Dorothy Canfield and Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Mrs. Fisher has attracted to herself an ever-widening host of readers who know her as a skilled writer of short stories, novels, juveniles and a frequent contributor to magazines. To any newcomer to the work of Mrs. Fisher (could there be any?) her enlightening comment on this selection from the novel by the young English poet-novelist, will substantiate her position in American literature. "Psychiatrists now tell us that sincerely written novels are good text-books for learning more about human nature. Long before they thought of this, long before there were any psychiatrists (so labeled), writers of sound fiction knew that stories are both portrayals and interpretations of life. Only the most narrowly literary-minded authors limit themselves to a cleverly drawn, skillfully colored picture of the surface of life. And theirs is not the work which endures. Thoughtful readers expect and demand, whether they are conscious of it or not, something more than to have their attention held and their interest aroused by the events narrated in a book. They want the plot to make sense, the characters to be human (that is to say, complex), they want the book to leave them with more insight. Without Dostoievsky's prescient brooding about men and women in the grip of society, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT would be just another detective story. Style, plot, beauty, excitement, are vital to good fiction. But most vital of all is contact with human souls, deeper, truer and more varied than is possible through the superficial contacts of our everyday living.

"It is true that there are universal traits of human nature. It is no less true that people vary in their manner of expressing and acting upon these fundamental urges. The mark of richly suggestive fiction as compared to pasteboard imitation, is that it catches and brings home to the reader the significance of such differing outlooks and reactions to environment. An American reader knows from experience nothing about the throbbing little

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

cosmos, profoundly human yet profoundly British, which centers around a Church of England. Anthony Trollope widens his horizon by taking him to share life as lived by a British clergyman. Joseph Conrad lifts a reader from the prairies out into mid-ocean, shows him what human life is, in that environment. Where is the novel which as surely and expertly shows us what life is to the men and women who work at factory machines, who count on a weekly pay envelope for their bread and butter?

“Consider a few authors whom the critics rank high: Hardy lived during the prodigious development of industrialism in England. With masterly vitality and truth he sets before us English agricultural workers, and (with a less sure hand) the professional world into which the more gifted of them try with tragic intensity to penetrate. Thackeray died in 1863. English manufacturing was going full swing by that time. Would anyone guess it from his London novels? Tolstoy’s horrified sympathy is—from natural limitations of his observation—all for the peasant on the land. Kipling wrote first and best about what he knew, life in India; later, by studious documentation, about marine engineers and cod-fishermen. He never documented himself about the man who swings a dinner pail. Hamlin Garland, not a fiction writer of the first rank, still managed to give us portraits of struggling farmers, far more intensely felt than any we have of struggling mill-hands. James Farrell trains his pitiless spotlight on Chicago’s frustrated pool-room loafers. Richard Wright, as far as his books show, knows no more about the production-line as seen by the men and women who work on it, than we do. Pearl Buck tells us about Chinese farmers. But there are mills in China, too.

“Probably the truth is that, so far, most novelists are brought up to no family or clan tradition about the color and quality of factory life, as most of them were brought up, through their childhood, to traditions about farming, the professions, white-collar or house-mother work or the practise of the arts. And without that hidden base of almost unaware personal connection with a way of life, floating unseen below the surface, there is no support for the tiny part of consciousness which, like the visible part of an iceberg, is all that appears of a novelist in print. I am always looking eagerly among new books for one portraying modern wage-earners which has the power, certainty of touch, depth of divination and skill in writing which good fiction has made us expect from soundly written stories about other people. But I don’t find such books. As far as factory wage-earners go, we moderns are cut off from a book-source of deeper understanding which in the past has enormously helped us make more sense out of the mysterious complexity of human existence.

La Virginie

"I find this painful. The number of industrial workers grows larger all the time. It is no longer from a few, but from the majority of western humanity that I am shut off not only by lack of personal connection, but by lack of the creative interpretation which, for other kinds of workers, I have had from fiction.

"This is the explanation of my choice of part of the first chapter of Alex Comfort's THE POWER HOUSE. Of course the fine bravura of this brilliant piece of writing would in itself make any author's mouth water. But what moved me to startled admiration was the scene the author has chosen brilliantly to describe; the men and women he shows us living in that background so unfamiliar to me. From the first pages with the symbolic killing of a man by an engine because, being human he was occasionally inattentive to details as a machine never is, I kept saying to myself, 'I wish I knew enough to have written this?'

"I have no idea who Alex Comfort is. I can't imagine how anyone writing English with so sure a skill can know so much about French industrial workers. I don't need to know these facts. The authenticity of his picture is self-evident. He is talking about a world of which most writers and most readers know little. A world into which we are being drawn swiftly and inevitably. And he knows what he is talking about."

LA VIRGINIE was turning over quietly. Each rotation of her two-ton crank as it dipped in the crank pit made the ashtray on Fougueux's deal table jump, and the two blazing white lights high up in the engine room roof blinked. Looking as it were over the shoulder of the engine, he saw the curious taut flicker of his two brass eccentrics, with the shadows of the spokes crossing them as the flywheel went round. From his bench the flywheel was only a wide edgewise band of steel, like an upward waterfall, the streaks of oil crossing it like branches being washed away and vanishing over its crest. It spun slowly, savagely, without a sound, only deadening the air in the engine house by its presence, so that when the white wood door flew open and Pizot's Lise rushed in, the engineer could only see her mouth as she yelled, but hear nothing at all. Her hair escaping from

From THE POWER HOUSE. Copyright, 1945, by Alex Comfort, reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

under her work cap, her big breasts shaking under her overalls, her scattered yellow teeth, all lit up by those two bright shadeless lights, and the terror in her face—but not a sound. Loubain, the second, working farther down *La Virginie*'s flank, holding his swab of waste to touch a valve link each time it rose, straightened and put his ear to her mouth. Then he whistled between his teeth and slashed his hand across his chest. The whistle sounded across the silence of the flywheel as a small whisper, but Fogueux was already half-way to the cutoff wheel.

The waterfall shivered slightly, *La Virginie*'s rushing spokes slowed, and Fogueux cautiously reversed the valve gear. *La Virginie* complained, the engine house shuddered a little. Loubain was already starting through the door into the loomshed, from which, as the wheel's speed decreased, noise began to come in, screams and the flapping of belts. *La Virginie* stood still, her own large belts vibrating, and the edge of the flywheel frozen back to steel, with a blotch of oil across it. Outside the flap of the belts combined with a sack-like thud, thud which Fogueux had heard twice before. He went to the door, not anxious to see it. The thudding ceased as he got there, and he heard a distinct gasp, from the hundred people who worked behind the wood door. Looking into the loomshed, with its long, plantation groves of machines, and the hanging foliage of jacquard cards, there was nothing to see. All the women were jammed together in one corner, and the waste-boy was running round their legs, putting his hand on their shoulders and jumping, trying to look over. A main belt swooped down off its pulley into the middle of the knot. Over the pulley was a corner of white-washed ceiling before the glass began, and on it was a wide dark smear. Fogueux went back in again. Pizot hadn't been feeling well that morning. Fogueux opined he must have slipped. It didn't do for middle-aged men to stay on as loomsweepers. That was a job for the boys. Loubain, being devout, was crossing himself energetically, *La Virginie* steamed softly from various pores as if sunning herself, thrown out shining under those lights. It was not her fault.

In the engineer's office above the small works courtyard, old

La Virginie

Duneulin, the owner, who had been arguing with young Duneulin and the resident engineer, was trying to get his daughter away from the window. "Don't look, my dear—I think there's been an accident."

A moment or two later one of the charge-hands pushed Loubain aside, wiping his bald head—Fougueux had heard him shouting in the shop pushing them back to work, across the low chattering and the sound of feet on the concrete—"Now then, you can't help him; break it up, break it up. You'll be stopped off on this. I told him a million bloody times to mind that bloody belt. Break it up." He was a small, dark, ugly Breton who had been a sailor, and had risen from the shop by sheer brute toughness and an ability to live without food. He was rubbing his hands on a ball of waste, like a snowball, staining it red wherever he touched it, and finally tossing it into the crank pit.

"Start her going again," he shouted to Fougueux across the body of *La Virginie*. "I've got him out. He took the guard off it himself. Said it was easier. They can't blame me."

He went through the other door into the passage leading to the office. The talking in the loomshed had sunk to a terrified silence. The little threads of steam from *La Virginie*'s glands kicked a little as he closed the door and a puff of fog blew in. Loubain walked back, holding his waste against his mouth and doing his best not to be sick. He had seen the last descent of that belt, before it stopped, like a dog dropping a rat it has shaken.

Fougueux went back to the wheel, and opened it gradually. The waves running along *La Virginie*'s belt, as if it were a water surface in a bath, flattened into a bowstring vibration. One by one the spokes rose out of the pit and plunged again, turning slowly into a mobile arc of light rising twenty feet overhead, washed down in which one could catch a glimpse of spokes big as a thigh flying as one looked away. Slowly the silence emanating from the wheel pushed out the sounds from the loomshed. *La Virginie* spun as if she had not stopped, her yellow eccentrics dancing and her wilderness of rods tossing up and down as Loubain crossed the small footbridge which spanned her middle, trembling at every thrust; her links threw up at him as though playfully threatening to knock him off. He stood,

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

looking mutely at Fougueux from the summit of the little bridge, the engine between them, his hands on the brass plate, engraved in red and black Borghese like a tombstone, which bore *La Virginie's* name and pedigree:

BUILT BY JOHN WILKINS, SONS, AND COLLINS, INC.
MARINE & INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS,
BELLEVILLE, VIRGINIA.

She lay stretching over a full hundred and twenty feet, her sides shining and the small puffs of steam crossing her piston, polished and large as a young tree, that leapt in and out under Loubain's feet. "C'est ma femme—la voilà qui est sage, puisqu'on ne peut pas coucher avec," as Loubain used to say. Fougueux did not want to meet Loubain's eye as he looked up out of the cauldron of moving parts. He got up from his bench and walked down the steps to the side of the wheel pit, then up a small flight to the bridge which spanned the main crankshaft, picking up his can and running his handful of waste along the rail. The bridge was only a foot from the flywheel. Fougueux stood upon it for a few moments, his back to the engine, looking into the spokes, feeling the wind of them as they flew past his face. The metal under him had an internal shiver running in it, transmitted from the wheel. Then he walked on, touching his waste against the streaming metal on the edge of the wheel. Under *La Virginie's* flank a tangle of small rods rocked slowly, touching the wicks of the oilers and picking up a gold drop at each journey. Her body had a distinct warm odor. Fougueux bent down and insinuated his arm holding the can among the rods, his ear to one of them. The main crank was an enormous shadow in the interior of the machine, giving a lion-like grunt at the bottom of every stroke. Fougueux walked on, Loubain watching him go. Passing behind the low-pressure cylinder he turned the blow-out cock, letting out a clap of steam like a cannon shot, which eddied up to the lights in the roof. Then he did the same for the high-pressure cylinder, looking back down the entire length of *La Virginie*. Then he went back and

La Virginie

mounted the bridge beside Loubain, taking a fag-end from behind his ear, and stood with him, watching the rods.

He was twenty-three and had escaped his military service so far—first because his brother Marcel was still undergoing it—but Marcel had since died of meningitis at Roubaix, and that held good no longer—and then because the Bretin mill stood off its hands and his mother and his sisters were out of work. Now they were back. That didn't hold good, either. He was stricken at the idea of parting from *La Virginie* in her white, museum-like room with its lights which burned all day, summer and winter. Loubain was younger, and had a mop of yellow hair on which he wiped his hands, and which Fougueux feared would be the death of him one day when he leaned too far. They stood side by side, looking down into the machine and thinking the same thought. Then Loubain put his mouth to Fougueux's ear and shouted, "My God, what an end." Fougueux shouted back, "He took it off himself, didn't he?" They stood quiet again, thinking about the dead man, only glancing round when the charge-hand came back across the room with the resident engineer and went into the loomshead. After a moment or two they came back, holding up Lise, her body collapsed like a rubber toy, and her mouth moving, but still in the aquarium silence of *La Virginie's* wheel. The fog puffed in again as they shut the door. The light which hung over *La Virginie's* head winked deliberately three times. The knocking-off hooter did not penetrate the engine house, but the engineers felt *La Virginie* suddenly breathe more easily and begin to idle. The circle of silver which marked the flight of the two governor balls momentarily widened. Fougueux crossed over to the valve and turned her off. The cascade of steel slowed down and stopped once more, the belt rippling. A babel of talk blew in from the loom-shed and a clatter of feet. The two steel spheres of the governor dropped and hung. *La Virginie* was ready to sleep. Fougueux went round turning off cocks while Loubain put on his coat. As he reached the door the lights went out, and only the spokes and the steel skeleton of the wheel stood out against the wired glass panels of the passage.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

The women hands were crowding into the cloakroom, a boarded-off corner of the alleyway where the coats hung. Squeals and chatter came out. Pot-à-Col was walking away with the key suspended from a piece of wood, for the door remained locked during working hours. Fogueux could smell their clothes and hear their voices. Everyone was upset. Duneulin's had a good reputation in the matter of accidents. But the plant was getting old. People began to wonder.

The gate of the factory was ornate and spiked like the portcullis of a castle, and outside there was nothing but mist in which hung the two wide orange balls at the check windows. Beyond those everything was blind, but on this side he could see the irregular string of men waiting, their thumbs in their belts, talking under their breath about the accident, hunched up and stamping on the invisible flagstones to keep warm. The bell on the time recorder marked them out one by one, and they vanished. Fogueux got a momentary glimpse of the rows of pink cards in the office racks and then went out also, into the mist.

He was still deaf from the silence of the wheel. Walking home to the tram was almost the first thing he could remember, only then he had been behind his mother, seeing her thighs swing as she walked, and keeping close behind her like a calf, full of the one fear of being left behind in the mist. Outside was no road, but large rough clinker underfoot which cut through leather. Turning left he followed the factory wall, groping, passing through denser patches of mist where steam rose out of gratings, and the trunks of grimed white pipes as big as trees were surprisingly warm when he staggered against them. They swooped down out of the darkness and the mist, some of them chuckling internally where a gas engine was running. The rank of windows over him still lit, showing as a line of pale, washed-out lemon oblongs, with the whickering shadow of a fan rotating in some of them, the belts going flick, flick, and the bearings squeaking a little. As he went by them they slowed and stopped, the fan became stationary, and the lights went out. He turned away from the dirty bricks, following his nose.

He went carefully so as not to fall into the engine dam, which

lay steaming quietly behind its low parapet, somewhere in the mist to his right. All round him were figures which he could not see. There were small crunches and scrapings, laughs, words, and a steady continuous patter like rain falling in large drops. Now and then he would jostle a walking figure, a man in overalls or a woman in a tight cap, seen against the relative translucence of the mist. He found a pair of rails that shone in the mist, and began to walk along them, still conscious that he was surrounded by an invisible crowd. He was hurrying home. His cousin Louisette was having a child that day.

Overhead two lights were swinging, high up above the mist, on the embankment: the green light of a signal, and the fluctuating orange star of the platelayer's brazier, which turned slowly on its hook and cast long wide rays like solid slices of butter down upon the irregular upper surface of the mist. This surface was not more than a few inches above Fougueux's head, and above it the night was quite clear. A white beam crossed the sky obliquely like a scythe, every two minutes, pivoting upon the lighthouse which lay out of sight behind the railway bank.

A train whistled, and he could hear it coming somewhere northward. He stopped for a moment to listen, wondering if it was on the upper or lower line. Then he saw it, threading its way along the embankment like a luminous worm. He waited until it was out of sight, and then walked on.

Presently he stopped again, fearing the trembling in the ground, then made sure of his bearings. He did not want to lose his way. He would not be the first to be knocked down by an engine going home across the flats on a misty night. The lines ran and intersected in all directions, bewilderingly. He put his foot on a rail and felt it come suddenly alive. Although the sky was clear above his head he had to bend and find the ends of the sleepers with his toe to be sure that he was in the six-foot and not between the rails themselves. The rumbling increased, and a watery yellow eye swam toward him. He watched it pass, the pump going like a small autonomous heart, and the shunter hanging onto the cab rail holding his horn. Almost immediately under Fougueux's feet there was a sudden red flash and

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

thud of a fog signal. If he'd trodden on that, he would have been minus a foot. The flash lit up the black penthouse where the linesman sat. He was too far to the right. This lunar country was like the bottom of the sea. There were predatory locomotives swimming to and fro, and unexpected snares underfoot. He shrugged and walked on; figures crossed the triangle of red lamps on the receding train.

The invisible crowd was closing in, coughing, and the patter of their feet on the clinker changed to the sound of sheep trotting and shuffling over cobbles. There were bleating sneezes and words all round. He was surrounded by millions of invisible sheep. The patter was that of innumerable carpet slippers. Leather was getting expensive; the carpet slippers with their strong card soles were appearing everywhere. They were in tartans and insolent colors, a mockery to the people who bought them. Grizzled old men who had been shunters in the yards wore them to loaf in—and anyone who still worked wore them also, and consciously chose the part of the street where the cobbles were least painfully rounded. Fougueux, coming from a household where there were four working, had boots, discarded for him by Uncle Pécquard, who had been well off once, but now with the bowing of his legs found them the wrong shape for his feet. La Fougueuse, who could not wear boots, though she had tried, went to work in slippers which had been scarlet and yellow, but had now the matted grayness of a dead animal left too long in the weather. The soiled pompoms remained, trailing behind the shoes on extenuated cottons. His mother would never consent to remove them. People passed remarks about them.

Yes, he had boots, and things weren't too bad. Boots meant that one was level—not going down, at any rate. One could tell the relative prosperities of the mills from their operatives' footwear.

Among the warehouses beyond the clinker flats there were a good many more lights, lemon-colored globes like large luminous citrus fruits outside the warehouses, hanging at all heights: and there was also less mist; one could see it billowing in among the sacks and the heaps of coal under a spiderwork of roof girders. A few locomotives stood about, steaming quietly. Cranes were still running here and

La Virginie

there, groaning internally, with huge spotlights on their jibs, and the cranemen's cabs standing clear of the mist, in the heart of the enormous steel diagrams that stood up against the sky, moving almost imperceptibly like a clock hand, minute trains of wagons rolling on trestles, hooks and long ophidian cables dropping into the mist to go up again carrying bundles of sacks. Fougueux thought of Uncle Pécquard, perched overhead like God, his distorted arms bowed into semicircles by a peculiar disease, swinging the jib of his twenty-ton crane over the mist, alone up there with the beam of the lighthouse that flicked across the upper jib girders every two minutes. The crowd that moved with him was tangible now, trotting, shuffling, talking. He caught Pizot's name, "*ce pauvre bougre*"—and then Lise: taken home screaming through the funereal streets in the resident engineer's car, a notorious shrew, who had bullied her man and borne him twelve children, now making that strange and terrible ride on real leather cushions, whose prospect chilled every woman in the mill. And Pizot, cracked like a matchbox, coming home in the van. . . . Accidents were appalling things. Lucky they didn't have many.

He thought he saw Loubain ahead, knowing him by his height and his shock of hair, and yelled after him, but he did not turn. The crowd was filing together, queueing like sheep to be dipped, waiting the turn to file over the narrow catwalk of the sluice gates on the middle canal, under the rusty bows and large blind hawse holes of a ship, like a lizard's skull, only the first syllable of her name sticking out of the mist, but her hull shaking with the hammering and beating of the shipwrights inside. A welding flame was carried by through the dark, hissing like a bright dazzling blue star. Beyond there were definitive streets flanked by low wide sheds and traversed by railway lines. Ahead there were lights and tramcars assembling. The operatives who lived over toward Beaumarais and the cemetery—out among the marshes and the perpetual fogs at the outer city defenses—were filing off to sit on the wicker seats and be carried into the deepest part of the mist. There were knots of men on corners and outside cafés, the light of an open bar door pouring between their

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

feet. One of them yelled to Fogueux to come in for a drink, and tell them about the accident, but he did not stop.

Presently he found himself walking almost alone, clear of the mist, going through streets almost under the shadow of the lighthouse. He could see smaller lights in the windows of its staircase, and the reflection of the street lights in the revolving lenses of its lantern, until suddenly the beam itself sailed overhead like an arm, crossing the water of the harbor, flying out over the roofs and over the mist. That was another thing he'd always remembered. He walked along the edge of the basin, looking down on the fishing boats that were not out that night, jostling under the stones, in their shadow. Then he picked his way over the railway lines and turned into the Courgain itself.

Here street lighting stopped. He had to go carefully, avoiding the kennel in the middle of the roadway and the wooden garbage spouts sticking out from the houses. Cats rushed off into the shadow from under his feet at every few steps, showing pairs of electric green eyes. It was early yet. There were lights in one or two of the doors, and men standing there smoking. Radios were playing, with every conceivable distortion. Most of the children were indoors, but some of them still ran about, half-visible figures splashing about in the pools of suds that had accumulated in blocked parts of the kennel, as they always did at this time, when the bathtubs were emptied. The place again, like *La Virginie*, smelt of live body, as if a multiplicity of organisms were combined in one, a warm-blooded coral.

LOUIS BROMFIELD:

“I wish I had written
The Day the Dam Broke

by JAMES THURBER”

Mr. Bromfield, winner of the 1927 Pulitzer Prize novel award and author of THE GREEN BAY TREE, THE RAINS CAME, and the recent best-selling PLEASANT VALLEY, to name a few of the highlights on his list of successes, stands high on the roster of our best novelists. He wishes he had written this sketch “because it is a fine example of the rarest and most difficult kind of writing—truly humorous writing, not characterized by a dislike for the human race but by a love for it, with all its weaknesses and absurdities. It is really humorous writing belonging to the ages, as good to read five thousand years hence as today. That it is somewhat based upon the foibles of the citizens of my own state and Thurber’s does not alter its eternal character. There were undoubtedly Ohioans in the valley of the Euphrates six thousand years ago and undoubtedly they behaved in a similarly absurd fashion on hearing false rumors of an approaching flood. In my opinion Thurber is one of the few writing men of our times who might be said to have genius in the authentic sense of that over-worked word. I think he grows better with age, not only Thurber himself but the things he has written and the pictures he has drawn long ago.”

MY MEMORIES of what my family and I went through during the 1913 flood in Ohio I would gladly forget. And yet neither the hardships we endured nor the turmoil and confusion we experienced can alter my feelings toward my native state and city. I am having a fine time now and wish Columbus were here, but if anyone ever wished a city was in hell it was during that frightful and

Permission of the author. Copyright, 1929, 1933, by James Thurber. Originally published in *The New Yorker*.

Louis Bromfield

perilous afternoon in 1913 when the dam broke, or, to be more exact, when everybody in town *thought* that the dam broke. We were both ennobled and demoralized by the experience. Grandfather especially rose to magnificent heights which can never lose their splendor for me, even though his reactions to the flood were based upon a profound misconception; namely, that Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry was the menace we were called upon to face. The only possible means of escape for us was to flee the house, a step which grandfather sternly forbade, brandishing his old army sabre in his hand. "Let the sons — — come!" he roared. Meanwhile hundreds of people were streaming by our house in wild panic, screaming, "Go east! Go east!" We had to stun grandfather with the ironing board. Impeded as we were by the inert form of the old gentleman—he was taller than six feet and weighed almost a hundred and seventy pounds—we were passed, in the first half-mile, by practically everybody else in the city. Had grandfather not come to, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, we would unquestionably have been overtaken and engulfed by the roaring waters—that is, if there had *been* any roaring waters. Later, when the panic had died down and people had gone rather sheepishly back to their homes and their offices, minimizing the distances they had run and offering various reasons for running, city engineers pointed out that even if the dam had broken, the water level would not have risen more than two additional inches in the West Side. The West Side was, at the time of the dam scare, under thirty feet of water—as, indeed, were all Ohio river towns during the great spring floods of twenty years ago. The East Side (where we lived and where all the running occurred) had never been in any danger at all. Only a rise of some ninety-five feet could have caused the flood waters to flow over High Street—the thoroughfare that divided the east side of town from the west—and engulf the East Side.

The fact that we were all as safe as kittens under a cookstove did not, however, assuage in the least the fine despair and the grotesque desperation which seized upon the residents of the East Side when the cry spread like a grass fire that the dam had given way. Some

The Day the Dam Broke

of the most dignified, staid, cynical, and clear-thinking men in town abandoned their wives, stenographers, homes, and offices and ran east. There are few alarms in the world more terrifying than "The dam has broken!" There are few persons capable of stopping to reason when that clarion cry strikes upon their ears, even persons who live in towns no nearer than five hundred miles to a dam.

The Columbus, Ohio, broken-dam rumor began, as I recall it, about noon of March 12, 1913. High Street, the main canyon of trade, was loud with the placid hum of business and the buzzing of placid businessmen arguing, computing, wheedling, offering, refusing, compromising. Darius Conningway, one of the foremost corporation lawyers in the Middle-West, was telling the Public Utilities Commission in the language of Julius Caesar that they might as well try to move the Northern star as to move him. Other men were making their little boasts and their little gestures. Suddenly somebody began to run. It may be that he had simply remembered, all of a moment, an engagement to meet his wife, for which he was now frightfully late. Whatever it was, he ran east on Broad Street (probably toward the Maramor Restaurant, a favorite place for a man to meet his wife). Somebody else began to run, perhaps a newsboy in high spirits. Another man, a portly gentleman of affairs, broke into a trot. Inside of ten minutes, everybody on High Street, from the Union Depot to the Courthouse was running. A loud mumble gradually crystallized into the dread word "dam." "The dam has broke!" The fear was put into words by a little old lady in an electric, or by a traffic cop, or by a small boy: nobody knows who, nor does it now really matter. Two thousand people were abruptly in full flight. "Go east!" was the cry that arose—east away from the river, east to safety. "Go east! Go east! Go east!"

Black streams of people flowed eastward down all the streets leading in that direction; these streams, whose headwaters were in the drygoods stores, office buildings, harness shops, movie theatres, were fed by trickles of housewives, children, cripples, servants, dogs, and cats, slipping out of the houses past which the main streams flowed, shouting and screaming. People ran out leaving fires burning and

Louis Bromfield

food cooking and doors wide open. I remember, however, that my mother turned out all the fires and that she took with her a dozen eggs and two loaves of bread. It was her plan to make Memorial Hall, just two blocks away, and take refuge somewhere in the top of it, in one of the dusty rooms where war veterans met and where old battle flags and stage scenery were stored. But the seething throngs, shouting "Go east!" drew her along and the rest of us with her. When grandfather regained full consciousness, at Parsons Avenue, he turned upon the retreating mob like a vengeful prophet and exhorted the men to form ranks and stand off the Rebel dogs, but at length he, too, got the idea that the dam had broken and, roaring "Go east!" in his powerful voice, he caught up in one arm a small child and in the other a slight clerkish man of perhaps forty-two and we slowly began to gain on those ahead of us.

A scattering of firemen, policemen, and army officers in dress uniforms—there had been a review at Fort Hayes, in the northern part of town—added color to the surging billows of people. "Go east!" cried a little child in a piping voice, as she ran past a porch on which drowsed a lieutenant-colonel of infantry. Used to quick decisions, trained to immediate obedience, the officer bounded off the porch, and, running at full tilt, soon passed the child, bawling "Go east!" The two of them emptied rapidly the houses of the little street they were on. "What is it? What is it?" demanded a fat, waddling man who intercepted the colonel. The officer dropped behind and asked the little child what it was. "The dam has broke!" gasped the girl. "The dam has broke!" roared the colonel. "Go east! Go east! Go east!" He was soon leading, with the exhausted child in his arms, a fleeing company of three hundred persons who had gathered around him from living-rooms, shops, garages, backyards, and basements.

Nobody has ever been able to compute with any exactness how many people took part in the great rout of 1913, for the panic, which extended from the Winslow Bottling Works in the south end to Clintonville six miles north, ended as abruptly as it began and the bobtail and ragtag and velvet-gowned groups of refugees melted away and slunk home, leaving the streets peaceful and deserted. The

The Day the Dam Broke

shouting, weeping, tangled evacuation of the city lasted not more than two hours in all. Some few people got as far east as Reynoldsburg, twelve miles away; fifty or more reached the Country Club, eight miles away; most of the others gave up, exhausted, or climbed trees in Franklin Park, four miles out. Order was restored and fear dispelled finally by means of militiamen riding about in motor lorries bawling through megaphones: "The dam has *not* broken!" At first this tended only to add to the confusion and increase the panic, for many stampeders thought the soldiers were bellowing, "The dam has now broken!" thus setting an official seal of authentication on the calamity.

All the time, the sun shone quietly and there was nowhere any sign of oncoming waters. A visitor in an airplane, looking down on the straggling, agitated masses of people below, would have been hard put to it to divine a reason for the phenomenon. It must have inspired, in such an observer, a peculiar kind of terror, like the sight of the *Marie Celeste*, abandoned at sea, its galley fires peacefully burning, its tranquil decks bright in the sunlight.

An aunt of mine, Aunt Edith Taylor, was in a movie theatre on High Street when, over and above the sound of the piano in the pit (a W. S. Hart picture was being shown), there rose the steadily increasing tromp of running feet. Persistent shouts rose above the tromping. An elderly man, sitting near my aunt, mumbled something, got out of his seat, and went up the aisle at a dogtrot. This started everybody. In an instant the audience was jamming the aisles. "Fire!" shouted a woman who always expected to be burned up in a theatre; but now the shouts outside were louder and coherent. "The dam has broke!" cried somebody. "Go east!" screamed a small woman in front of my aunt. And east they went, pushing and shoving and clawing, knocking women and children down, emerging finally into the street, torn and sprawling. Inside the theatre, Bill Hart was calmly calling some desperado's bluff and the brave girl at the piano played "Row! Row! Row!" loudly and then "In My Harem." Outside, men were streaming across the Statehouse yard, others were climbing trees, a woman managed to get up onto the

Louis Bromfield

“These Are My Jewels” statue, whose bronze figures of Sherman, Stanton, Grant, and Sheridan watched with cold unconcern the going to pieces of the capital city.

“I ran south to State Street, east on State to Third, south on Third to Town, and out east on Town,” my Aunt Edith has written me. “A tall spare woman with grim eyes and a determined chin ran past me down the middle of the street. I was still uncertain as to what was the matter, in spite of all the shouting. I drew up alongside the woman with some effort, for although she was in her late fifties, she had a beautiful easy running form and seemed to be in excellent condition. “What is it?” I puffed. She gave me a quick glance and then looked ahead again, stepping up her pace a trifle. “Don’t ask me, ask God!” she said.

“When I reached Grant Avenue, I was so spent that Dr. H. R. Mallory—you remember Dr. Mallory, the man with the white beard who looks like Robert Browning?—well, Dr. Mallory, whom I had drawn away from at the corner of Fifth and Town, passed me. “It’s got us!” he shouted, and I felt sure that whatever it was *did* have us, for you know what conviction Dr. Mallory’s statements always carried. I didn’t know at the time what he meant, but I found out later. There was a boy behind him on rollerskates, and Dr. Mallory mistook the swishing of the skates for the sound of rushing water. He eventually reached the Columbus School for Girls, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, where he collapsed, expecting the cold frothing waters of the Scioto to sweep him into oblivion. The boy on the skates swirled past him and Dr. Mallory realized for the first time what he had been running from. Looking back up the street, he could see no signs of water, but nevertheless, after resting a few minutes, he jogged on east again. He caught up with me at Ohio Avenue, where we rested together. I should say that about seven hundred people passed us. A funny thing was that all of them were on foot. Nobody seemed to have had the courage to stop and start his car; but as I remember it, all cars had to be cranked in those days, which is probably the reason.”

The Day the Dam Broke

The next day, the city went about its business as if nothing had happened, but there was no joking. It was two years or more before you dared treat the breaking of the dam lightly. And even now, twenty years after, there are a few persons, like Dr. Mallory, who will shut up like a clam if you mention the Afternoon of the Great Run.

MARGARET FISHBACK:

"I wish I had written

Natura in Urbe

by E. B. WHITE

Miss Fishback, a top-notch creator of light verse as her OUT OF MY MIND, I FEEL BETTER Now and LOOK WHO'S A MOTHER prove by the bookful, pays tribute to Mr. White's facile pen by this choice.

While midnight clung to every shore
I walked me round the reservoir,
With little cause and little sense
I ambled round and round the fence,
And once, while standing quietly,
I saw a little duck swim by.

I plainly saw his head a-wobble,
I plainly saw his tail a-bobble,
As all across the captive lake
He spread his negligible wake.
And I can scarce begin to tell
How mystical this caravel,
Or how surprised I was to see
A duck as wide awake as me.

Afloat at night upon the deep
You'd think a duck would go to sleep,
You'd think a normal duck would hanker
To close his eyes and ride at anchor;

Permission of the author and *The New Yorker*. Copyright 1928, by The F-R. Publishing Corporation.

Natura in Urbe

You'd think a duck would set his breast
Against the wave, and come to rest;
You'd think that twelve o'clock were late
For any duck to navigate
All round and round the reservoir.
I wondered what he did it for.

I wondered if he'd left his kind
Because of something on his mind,
A midnight sail to clear his vision
And help him reach some duck decision.
Surely he would not swim and swim
Were something hard not troubling him.
It was preposterous to think
A duck would rouse to get a drink;
Nor was it anything but silly
To think he paddled willy nilly;
And though 'twas funny to suppose
A little duck had secret woes,
And though it put me on my mettle
To guess what problems ducks must settle,
I liked to think he swam the deep
Because he simply *could not* sleep.

ESTHER FORBES:

"I wish I had written

A Day of Peace

from WAR AND PEACE

by LEO TOLSTOY"

Miss Forbes, the historical novelist who wrote PARADISE, THE GENERAL'S LADY, and the 1943 Pulitzer Prize winning PAUL REVERE & THE WORLD HE LIVED IN, has also written many short stories. Miss Forbes, whose PAUL REVERE has been meritoriously honored by Mr. Marquis James in this collection, prefaces her own choice thus: "In the foreword Clifton Fadiman wrote for WAR AND PRICE (and I also wish I had written that foreword) he speaks of Tolstoy's almost 'abnormal normality' which 'makes him able to do what seems a very easy thing but is really very hard: describe people engaged in nothing but being happy.' That is one reason I have chosen these happy pages from the great novel of which it is said, 'everything is in it.'

"It was Tolstoy's genius that he could understand and love (love with his large 'animal serenity' or as forgivingly as God Himself) so many sorts of characters. Here in this brief selection he characteristically hunts with the hounds and runs with the wolf. He is as aware of the dignity, the innocence of the old she-wolf as he is of the primitive and equally innocent ferocity of the hunters. Here only people are indeed 'engaged in nothing but being happy.' Tolstoy saw the tragedy of the old wolf, not even killed but bound, gagged and humiliated. They did not. Nor did it bother them to hear that for one of the hunting dogs 'three families of house serfs' had been given. They are thoughtless and feckless but Tolstoy himself is neither. Yet seemingly he pronounces no judgment. There they go through the woods, the hounds and the dogs crying, the shouts of the excited riders and at last night coming down and the visit to 'Uncle's.'

"As the people themselves are presented so naturally and with seeming so little effort so is all of the background. When they reach 'Uncle's' the reader also enters the house, sees it and smells it. Here is no self-conscious 'atmosphere.' But what a wonderful house and how lucky 'Uncle' is to have a 'housekeeper' like Anisya! And never did a novel-reader taste

A Day of Peace

better food than ‘Uncle’s’ pickled mushrooms, honey, cherry brandy, nor is the music of the balalaika anywhere else quite so mysteriously enchanting. The reader is there and what is important to the characters is important to him. For instance he, as well as Nicholas, hopes Natásha will be able to forget the French dancing master and really cut loose and dance like a Russian. We care more that this shall be a good party than we care, in many novels, whether the hero lives or dies or the heroine gets over her psychosis.

“It is all so simple. It looks so easy and is so very hard. I wish I had written it but I never could have.”

THE WOLF IS TAKEN

NICHOLAS ROSTÓV meanwhile remained at his post, waiting for the wolf. By the way the hunt approached and receded, by the cries of the dogs whose notes were familiar to him, by the way the voices of the huntsmen approached, receded, and rose, he realized what was happening at the copse. He knew that young and old wolves were there, that the hounds had separated into two packs, that somewhere a wolf was being chased, and that something had gone wrong. He expected the wolf to come his way any moment. He made thousands of different conjectures as to where and from what side the beast would come and how he would set upon it. Hope alternated with despair. Several times he addressed a prayer to God that the wolf should come his way. He prayed with that passionate and shame-faced feeling with which men pray at moments of great excitement arising from trivial causes. “What would it be to Thee to do this for me?” he said to God. “I know Thou art great, and that it is a sin to ask this of Thee, but for God’s sake do let the old wolf come my way and let Karáy spring at it—in sight of ‘Uncle’ who is watching from over there—and seize it by the throat in a death grip!” A thousand times during that half-hour Rostóv cast eager and restless glances over the edge of the wood, with the two scraggy oaks

From *WAR AND PEACE*, Inner Sanctum Edition, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude. Copyright, 1942, by Simon and Schuster, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Simon and Schuster, Inc. (Book VII.)

Esther Forbes

rising above the aspen undergrowth and the gully with its water-worn side and “Uncle’s” cap just visible above the bush on his right.

“No, I shan’t have such luck,” thought Rostóv, “yet what wouldn’t it be worth! It is not to be! Everywhere, at cards and in war, I am always unlucky.” Memories of Austerlitz and of Dólokhov flashed rapidly and clearly through his mind. “Only once in my life to get an old wolf, I want only that!” thought he, straining eyes and ears and looking to the left and then to the right and listening to the slightest variation of note in the cries of the dogs.

Again he looked to the right and saw something running toward him across the deserted field. “No, it can’t be!” thought Rostóv, taking a deep breath, as a man does at the coming of something long hoped for. The height of happiness was reached—and so simply, without warning, or noise, or display, that Rostóv could not believe his eyes and remained in doubt for over a second. The wolf ran forward and jumped heavily over a gully that lay in her path. She was an old animal with a gray back and big reddish belly. She ran without hurry, evidently feeling sure that no one saw her. Rostóv, holding his breath, looked round at the borzois. They stood or lay not seeing the wolf or understanding the situation. Old Karáy had turned his head and was angrily searching for fleas, baring his yellow teeth and snapping at his hind legs.

“*Ulyulyulyu!*” whispered Rostóv, pouting his lips. The borzois jumped up, jerking the rings of the leashes and pricking their ears. Karáy finished scratching his hindquarters and, cocking his ears, got up with quivering tail from which tufts of matted hair hung down.

“Shall I loose them or not?” Nicholas asked himself as the wolf approached him coming from the copse. Suddenly the wolf’s whole physiognomy changed: she shuddered, seeing what she had probably never seen before—human eyes fixed upon her—and turning her head a little toward Rostóv, she paused.

“Back or forward? Eh, no matter, forward . . .” the wolf seemed to say to herself, and she moved forward without again looking round and with a quiet, long, easy yet resolute lope.

“*Ulyulyulyu!*” cried Nicholas, in a voice not his own, and of its own

A Day of Peace

accord his good horse darted headlong downhill, leaping over gullies to head off the wolf, and the borzois passed it, running faster still. Nicholas did not hear his own cry nor feel that he was galloping, nor see the borzois, nor the ground over which he went: he saw only the wolf, who, increasing her speed, bounded on in the same direction along the hollow. The first to come into view was Mílka, with her black markings and powerful quarters, gaining upon the wolf. Nearer and nearer . . . now she was ahead of it; but the wolf turned its head to face her, and instead of putting on speed as she usually did Mílka suddenly raised her tail and stiffened her forelegs.

“*Ulyulyulyulu!*” shouted Nicholas.

The reddish Lyubím rushed forward from behind Mílka, sprang impetuously at the wolf, and seized it by its hindquarters, but immediately jumped aside in terror. The wolf crouched, gnashed her teeth, and again rose and bounded forward, followed at the distance of a couple of feet by all the borzois, who did not get any closer to her.

“She’ll get away! No, it’s impossible!” thought Nicholas, still shouting with a hoarse voice.

“Karáy, *Ulyulyu!* . . .” he shouted, looking round for the old borzoi who was now his only hope. Karáy, with all the strength age had left him, stretched himself to the utmost and, watching the wolf, galloped heavily aside to intercept it. But the quickness of the wolf’s lopé and the borzoi’s slower pace made it plain that Karáy had miscalculated. Nicholas could already see not far in front of him the wood where the wolf would certainly escape should she reach it. But, coming toward him, he saw hounds and a huntsman galloping almost straight at the wolf. There was still hope. A long, yellowish young borzoi, one Nicholas did not know, from another leash, rushed impetuously at the wolf from in front and almost knocked her over. But the wolf jumped up more quickly than anyone could have expected and, gnashing her teeth, flew at the yellowish borzoi, which, with a piercing yelp, fell with its head on the ground, bleeding from a gash in its side.

“Karáy? Old fellow! . . .” wailed Nicholas.

Esther Forbes

Thanks to the delay caused by this crossing of the wolf's path, the old dog with its felted hair hanging from its thigh was within five paces of it. As if aware of her danger, the wolf turned her eyes on Karáy, tucked her tail yet further between her legs, and increased her speed. But here Nicholas only saw that something happened to Karáy—the borzoi was suddenly on the wolf, and they rolled together down into a gully just in front of them.

That instant, when Nicholas saw the wolf struggling in the gully with the dogs, while from under them could be seen her gray hair and outstretched hind leg and her frightened choking head, with her ears laid back (Karáy was pinning her by the throat), was the happiest moment of his life. With his hand on his saddlebow, he was ready to dismount and stab the wolf, when she suddenly thrust her head up from among that mass of dogs, and then her forepaws were on the edge of the gully. She clicked her teeth (Karáy no longer had her by the throat), leaped with a movement of her hind legs out of the gully, and having disengaged herself from the dogs, with tail tucked in again, went forward. Karáy, his hair bristling, and probably bruised or wounded, climbed with difficulty out of the gully.

"Oh, my God! Why?" Nicholas cried in despair.

"Uncle's" huntsman was galloping from the other side across the wolf's path and his borzois once more stopped the animal's advance. She was again hemmed in.

Nicholas and his attendant, with "Uncle" and his huntsman, were all riding round the wolf, crying "*ulyulyu!*!" shouting and preparing to dismount each moment that the wolf crouched back, and starting forward again every time she shook herself and moved toward the wood where she would be safe.

Already, at the beginning of this chase, Daniel, hearing the ulyulyuing had rushed out from the wood. He saw Karáy seize the wolf, and checked his horse, supposing the affair to be over. But when he saw that the horsemen did not dismount and that the wolf shook herself and ran for safety, Daniel set his chestnut galloping, not at the wolf but straight toward the wood, just as Karáy had run to cut

A Day of Peace

the animal off. As a result of this, he galloped up to the wolf just when she had been stopped a second time by "Uncle's" borzois.

Daniel galloped up silently, holding a naked dagger in his left hand and thrashing the laboring sides of his chestnut horse with his whip as if it were a flail.

Nicholas neither saw nor heard Daniel until the chestnut, breathing heavily, panted past him, and he heard the fall of a body and saw Daniel lying on the wolf's back among the dogs, trying to seize her by the ears. It was evident to the dogs, the hunters, and to the wolf herself that all was now over. The terrified wolf pressed back her ears and tried to rise, but the borzois stuck to her. Daniel rose a little, took a step, and with his whole weight, as if lying down to rest, fell on the wolf, seizing her by the ears. Nicholas was about to stab her, but Daniel whispered, "Don't! We'll gag her!" and, changing his position, set his foot on the wolf's neck. A stick was thrust between her jaws and she was fastened with a leash, as it bridled, her legs were bound together, and Daniel rolled her over once or twice from side to side.

With happy, exhausted faces, they laid the old wolf, alive, on a shying and snorting horse and, accompanied by the dogs yelping at her, took her to the place where they were all to meet. The hounds had killed two of the cubs and the borzois three. The huntsmen assembled with their booty and their stories, and all came to look at the wolf, which, with her broad-browed head hanging down and the bitten stick between her jaws, gazed with great glassy eyes at this crowd of dogs and men surrounding her. When she was touched, she jerked her bound legs and looked wildly yet simply at everybody. Old Count Rostóv also rode up and touched the wolf.

"Oh, what a formidable one!" said he. "A formidable one, eh?" he asked Daniel, who was standing near.

"Yes, your excellency," answered Daniel, quickly doffing his cap.

The count remembered the wolf he had let slip and his encounter with Daniel.

"Ah, but you are a crusty fellow, friend!" said the count.

Esther Forbes

For sole reply Daniel gave him a shy, childlike, meek, and amiable smile.

THE FOX HUNT AND THE HUNTSMEN'S QUARREL. ILÁGIN'S COURTESY. CHASING A HARE. RUGÁY'S TRIUMPH

The old count went home, and Natásha and Pétya promised to return very soon, but as it was still early the hunt went farther. At midday they put the hounds into a ravine thickly overgrown with young trees. Nicholas standing in a fallow field could see all his whips.

Facing him lay a field of winter rye, and there his own huntsman stood alone in a hollow behind a hazel bush. The hounds had scarcely been loosed before Nicholas heard one he knew, Voltórn, giving tongue at intervals; other hounds joined in, now pausing and now again giving tongue. A moment later he heard a cry from the wooded ravine that a fox had been found, and the whole pack, joining together, rushed along the ravine toward the ryefield and away from Nicholas.

He saw the whips in their red caps galloping along the edge of the ravine, he even saw the hounds, and was expecting a fox to show itself at any moment on the ryefield opposite.

The huntsman standing in the hollow moved and loosed his borzois, and Nicholas saw a queer, short-legged fox with a fine brush going hard across the field. The borzois bore down on it. . . . Now they drew close to the fox which began to dodge between the field in sharper and sharper curves, trailing its brush, when suddenly a strange white borzoi dashed in followed by a black one, and everything was in confusion; the borzois formed a star-shaped figure, scarcely swaying their bodies and with tails turned away from the center of the group. Two huntsmen galloped up to the dogs; one in a red cap, the other, a stranger, in a green coat.

"What's this?" thought Nicholas. "Where's that huntsman from? He is not 'Uncle's' man."

The huntsmen got the fox, but stayed there a long time without

A Day of Peace

strapping it to the saddle. Their horses, bridled and with high saddles, stood near them and there too the dogs were lying. The huntsmen waved their arms and did something to the fox. Then from that spot came the sound of a horn, with the signal agreed on in case of a fight.

"That's Ilágín's huntsman having a row with our Iván," said Nicholas' groom.

Nicholas sent the man to call Natásha and Pétya to him, and rode at a footpace to the place where the whips were getting the hounds together. Several of the field galloped to the spot where the fight was going on.

Nicholas dismounted, and with Natásha, and Pétya, who had ridden up, stopped near the hounds, waiting to see how the matter would end. Out of the bushes came the huntsman who had been fighting and rode toward his young master, with the fox tied to his crupper. While still at a distance he took off his cap and tried to speak respectfully, but he was pale and breathless and his face was angry. One of his eyes was black, but he probably was not even aware of it.

"What has happened?" asked Nicholas.

"A likely thing, killing a fox our dogs had hunted! And it was my gray bitch that caught it! Go to law, indeed! . . . He snatches at the fox! I gave him one with the fox. Here it is on my saddle! Do you want a taste of this? . . ." said the huntsman, pointing to his dagger and probably imagining himself still speaking to his foe.

Nicholas, not stopping to talk to the man, asked his sister and Pétya to wait for him and rode to the spot where the enemy's, Ilágín's, hunting party was.

The victorious huntsman rode off to join the field, and there, surrounded by inquiring sympathizers, recounted his exploits.

The facts were that Ilágín, with whom the Rostóvs had a quarrel and were at law, hunted over places that belonged by custom to the Rostóvs, and had now, as if purposely, sent his men to the very woods the Rostóvs were hunting and let his man snatch a fox their dogs had chased.

Nicholas, though he had never seen Ilágín, with his usual absence

Esther Forbes

of moderation in judgment, hated him cordially from reports of his arbitrariness and violence, and regarded him as his bitterest foe. He rode in angry agitation toward him, firmly grasping his whip and fully prepared to take the most resolute and desperate steps to punish his enemy.

Hardly had he passed an angle of the wood before a stout gentleman in a beaver cap came riding toward him on a handsome raven-black horse, accompanied by two hunt servants.

Instead of an enemy, Nicholas found in Ilágín a stately and courteous gentleman who was particularly anxious to make the young count's acquaintance. Having ridden up to Nicholas, Ilágín raised his beaver cap and said he much regretted what had occurred and would have the man punished who had allowed himself to seize a fox hunted by someone else's borzois. He hoped to become better acquainted with the count and invited him to draw his covert.

Natásha, afraid that her brother would do something dreadful, had followed him in some excitement. Seeing the enemies exchanging friendly greetings, she rode up to them. Ilágín lifted his beaver cap still higher to Natásha and said, with a pleasant smile, that the young countess resembled Diana in her passion for the chase as well as in her beauty, of which he had heard much.

To expiate his huntsman's offense, Ilágín pressed the Rostóvs to come to an upland of his about a mile away which he usually kept for himself and which, he said, swarmed with hares. Nicholas agreed, and the hunt, now doubled, moved on.

The way to Ilágín's upland was across the fields. The hunt servants fell into line. The masters rode together. "Uncle," Rostóv, and Ilágín kept stealthily glancing at one another's dogs, trying not to be observed by their companions and searching uneasily for rivals to their own borzois.

Rostóv was particularly struck by the beauty of a small, pure-bred, red-spotted bitch on Ilágín's leash, slender but with muscles like steel, a delicate muzzle, and prominent black eyes. He had heard of the swiftness of Ilágín's borzois, and in that beautiful bitch he saw a rival to his own Mílka.

A Day of Peace

In the middle of a sober conversation begun by Ilágín about the year's harvest, Nicholas pointed to the red-spotted bitch.

"A fine little bitch, that!" said he in a careless tone. "Is she swift?"

"That one? Yes, she's a good dog, gets what she's after," answered Ilágín indifferently, of the red-spotted bitch Erzá, for which, a year before, he had given a neighbor three families of house serfs. "So in your parts, too, the harvest is nothing to boast of, Count?" he went on, continuing the conversation they had begun. And considering it polite to return the young count's compliment, Ilágín looked at his borzois and picked out Mílka who attracted his attention by her breadth. "That black-spotted one of yours is fine—well-shaped!" said he.

"Yes, she's fast enough," replied Nicholas, and thought: "If only a full-grown hare would cross the field now I'd show you what sort of borzoi she is," and turning to his groom, he said he would give a ruble to anyone who found a hare.

"I don't understand," continued Ilágín, "how some sportsmen can be so jealous about game and dogs. For myself, I can tell you, Count, I enjoy riding in company such as this . . . what could be better? (he again raised his cap to Natásha) "but as for counting skins and what one takes, I don't care about that."

"Of course not!"

"Or being upset because someone else's borzoi and not mine catches something. All I care about is to enjoy seeing the chase, is it not so, Count? For I consider that . . ."

"*A-tu!*!" came the long-drawn cry of one of the borzoi whippers-in, who had halted. He stood on a knoll in the stubble, holding his whip aloft, and again repeated his long-drawn cry, "*A-tu!*!" (This call and the uplifted whip meant that he saw a sitting hare.)

"Ah, he has found one, I think," said Ilágín carelessly. "Well, let us course it, Count."

"Yes, we must ride up. . . . Shall we both course it?" answered Nicholas, seeing in Erzá and "Uncle's" red Rugáy two rivals he had never yet had a chance of pitting against his own borzois. "And sup-

Esther Forbes

pose they outdo my Mílka at once!" he thought as he rode with "Uncle" and Ilágín toward the hare.

"A full-grown one?" asked Ilágín as he approached the whip who had sighted the hare—and not without agitation he looked round and whistled to Erzá.

"And you, Michael Nikanórovich," he said, addressing "Uncle."

The latter was riding with a sullen expression on his face.

"How can I join in? Why, you've given a village for each of your borzois! That's it, come on! Yours are worth thousands. Try yours against one another, you two and I'll look on!"

"Rugáy, hey, hey!" he shouted. "Rugáyushka!" he added, involuntarily by this diminutive expressing his affection and the hopes he placed on this red borzoi. Natásha saw and felt the agitation the two elderly men and her brother were trying to conceal, and was herself excited by it.

The huntsman stood halfway up the knoll holding up his whip and the gentlefolk rode up to him at a footpace; the hounds that were far off on the horizon turned away from the hare, and the whips, but not the gentlefolk, also moved away. All were moving slowly and sedately.

"How is it pointing?" asked Nicholas, riding a hundred paces toward the whip who had sighted the hare.

But before the whip could reply, the hare, scenting the frost coming next morning, was unable to rest and leaped up. The pack on leash rushed downhill in full cry after the hare, and from all sides the borzois that were not on leash darted after the hounds and the hare. All the hunt, who had been moving slowly, shouted, "Stop!" calling in the hounds, while the borzoi whips, with a cry of "*A-tu!*" galloped across the field, setting the borzois on the hare. The tranquil Ilágín, Nicholas, Natásha, and "Uncle" flew, reckless of where and how they went, seeing only the borzois and the hare and fearing only to lose sight even for an instant of the chase. The hare they had started was a strong and swift one. When he jumped up he did not run at once, but pricked his ears listening to the shouting and trampling that resounded from all sides at once. He took a dozen bounds

A Day of Peace

not very quickly, letting the borzois gain on him, and finally having chosen his direction and realized his danger, laid back his ears and rushed off headlong. He had been lying in the stubble, but in front of him was the autumn sowing where the ground was soft. The two borzois of the huntsman who had sighted him, having been the nearest, were the first to see and pursue him, but they had not gone far before Ilágín's red-spotted Erzá passed them, got within a length, flew at the hare with terrible swiftness aiming at his scut, and, thinking she had seized him, rolled over like a ball. The hare arched his back and bounded off yet more swiftly. From behind Erzá rushed the broad-hunched, black-spotted Mílka and began rapidly gaining on the hare.

"Miláshka, dear!" rose Nicholas' triumphant cry. It looked as if Mílka would immediately pounce on the hare, but she overtook him and flew past. The hare had squatted. Again the beautiful Erzá reached him, but when close to the hare's scut paused as if measuring the distance, so as not to make a mistake this time but seize his hind leg.

"Erzá, darling!" Ilágín wailed in a voice unlike his own. Erzá did not hearken to his appeal. At the very moment when she would have seized her prey, the hare moved and darted along the balk between the winter rye and the stubble. Again Erzá and Mílka were abreast, running like a pair of carriage horses, and began to overtake the hare, but it was easier for the hare to run on the balk and the borzois did not overtake him so quickly.

"Rugáy, Rugáyushka! That's it, come on!" came a third voice just then, and "Uncle's" red borzoi, straining and curving its back, caught up with the two foremost borzois, pushed ahead of them regardless of the terrible strain, put on speed close to the hare, knocked it off the balk onto the ryefield, again put on speed still more viciously, sinking to his knees in the muddy field, and all one could see was how, muddying his back, he rolled over with the hare. A ring of borzois surrounded him. A moment later everyone had drawn up round the crowd of dogs. Only the delighted "Uncle" dismounted, and cut off a pad, shaking the hare for the blood to drip off, and

Esther Forbes

anxiously glancing round with restless eyes while his arms and legs twitched. He spoke without himself knowing whom to or what about. "That's it, come on! That's a dog! . . . There, it has beaten them all, the thousand-ruble as well as the one-ruble borzois. That's it, come on!" said he, panting and looking wrathfully around as if he were abusing someone, as if they were all his enemies and had insulted him, and only now had he at last succeeded in justifying himself. "There are your thousand-ruble ones. . . . That's it, come on! . . ."

"Rugáy, here's a pad for you!" he said, throwing down the hare's muddy pad. "You've deserved it, that's it, come on!"

"She'd tired herself out, she'd run it down three times by herself," said Nicholas, also not listening to anyone and regardless of whether he were heard or not.

"But what is there in running across it like that?" said Ilágín's groom.

"Once she had missed it and turned it away, any mongrel could take it," Ilágín was saying at the same time, breathless from his gallop and his excitement. At the same moment Natásha, without drawing breath, screamed joyously, ecstatically, and so piercingly that it set everyone's ear tingling. By that shriek she expressed what the others expressed by all talking at once, and it was so strange that she must herself have been ashamed of so wild a cry and everyone else would have been amazed at it at any other time. "Uncle" himself twisted up the hare, threw it neatly and smartly across his horse's back as if by that gesture he meant to rebuke everybody, and, with an air of not wishing to speak to anyone, mounted his bay and rode off. The others all followed, dispirited and shamefaced, and only much later were they able to regain their former affectation of indifference. For a long time they continued to look at red Rugáy who, his arched back spattered with mud and clanking the ring of his leash, walked along just behind "Uncle's" horse with the serene air of a conqueror.

"Well, I am like any other dog as long as it's not a question of

A Day of Peace

coursing. But when it is, then look out!" his appearance seemed to Nicholas to be saying.

When, much later, "Uncle" rode up to Nicholas and began talking to him, he felt flattered that, after what had happened, "Uncle" deigned to speak to him.

AN EVENING AT "UNCLE'S." THE BALALÁYKA.

NATÁSHA'S RUSSIAN DANCE

Toward evening Ilágín took leave of Nicholas, who found that they were so far from home that he accepted "Uncle's" offer that the hunting party should spend the night in his little village of Mikháylovna.

"And if you put up at my house that will be better still. That's it, come on!" said "Uncle." "You see it's damp weather, and you could rest, and the little countess could be driven home in a trap."

"Uncle's" offer was accepted. A huntsman was sent to Otrádnoe for a trap, while Nicholas rode with Natásha and Pétya to "Uncle's" house.

Some five male domestic serfs, big and little, rushed out to the front porch to meet their master. A score of women serfs, old and young, as well as children, popped out from the back entrance to have a look at the hunters who were arriving. The presence of Natásha—a woman, a lady, and on horseback—raised the curiosity of the serfs to such a degree that many of them came up to her, stared her in the face, and unabashed by her presence made remarks about her as though she were some prodigy on show and not a human being able to hear or understand what was said about her.

"Arínska! Look, she sits sideways! There she sits and her skirt dangles. . . . See, she's got a little hunting horn!"

"Goodness gracious! See her knife? . . ."

"Isn't she a Tartar!"

"How is it you didn't go head over heels?" asked the boldest of all, addressing Natásha directly.

"Uncle" dismounted at the porch of his little wooden house which stood in the midst of an overgrown garden and, after a glance at his

Esther Forbes

retainers, shouted authoritatively that the superfluous ones should take themselves off and that all necessary preparations should be made to receive the guests and the visitors.

The serfs all dispersed. "Uncle" lifted Natásha off her horse and taking her hand led her up the rickety wooden steps of the porch. The house, with its bare, unplastered log walls, was not overclean—it did not seem that those living in it aimed at keeping it spotless—but neither was it noticeably neglected. In the entry there was the smell of fresh apples, and wolf and fox skins hung about.

"Uncle" led the visitors through the anteroom into a small hall with a folding table and red chairs, then into the drawing room with a round birchwood table and a sofa, and finally into his private room, where there was a tattered sofa, a worn carpet, and portraits of Suvórov, of the host's father and mother, and of himself in military uniform. The study smelt strongly of tobacco and dogs. "Uncle" asked his visitors to sit down and make themselves at home, and then went out of the room. Rugáy, his back still muddy, came into the room and lay down on the sofa, cleaning himself with his tongue and teeth. Leading from the study was a passage in which a partition with ragged curtains could be seen. From behind this came women's laughter and whispers. Natásha, Nicholas, and Pétya took off their wraps and sat down on the sofa. Pétya, leaning on his elbow, fell asleep at once. Natásha and Nicholas were silent. Their faces glowed, they were hungry and very cheerful. They looked at one another (now that the hunt was over and they were in the house, Nicholas no longer considered it necessary to show his manly superiority over his sister), Natásha gave him a wink, and neither refrained long from bursting into a peal of ringing laughter even before they had a pretext ready to account for it.

After a while "Uncle" came in, in a Cossack coat, blue trousers, and small top boots. And Natásha felt that this costume, the very one she had regarded with surprise and amusement at Otrádnoe, was just the right thing and not at all worse than a swallow-tail or frock coat. "Uncle" too was in high spirits and far from being offended by the brother's and sister's laughter (it could never enter his head that

A Day of Peace

they might be laughing at his way of life) he himself joined in the merriment.

“That’s right, young countess, that’s it, come on! I never saw anyone like her!” said he, offering Nicholas a pipe with a long stem and, with a practiced motion of three fingers, taking down another that had been cut short. “She’s ridden all day like a man, and is as fresh as ever!”

Soon after “Uncle’s” reappearance the door was opened, evidently from the sound by a barefooted girl, and a stout, rosy, good-looking woman of about forty, with a double chin and full red lips, entered carrying a large loaded tray. With hospitable dignity and cordiality in her glance and in every motion, she looked at the visitors and, with a pleasant smile, bowed respectfully. In spite of her exceptional stoutness, which caused her to protrude her chest and stomach and throw back her head, this woman (who was “Uncle’s” housekeeper) trod very lightly. She went to the table, set down the tray, and with her plump white hands deftly took from it the bottles and various hors-d’oeuvres and dishes and arranged them on the table. When she had finished, she stepped aside and stopped at the door with a smile on her face. “Here I am. I am she! Now do you understand ‘Uncle’?” her expression said to Rostóv. How could one help understanding? Not only Nicholas, but even Natásha understood the meaning of his puckered brow and the happy complacent smile that slightly puckered his lips when Anísyá Fëdorovna entered. On the tray was a bottle of herb wine, different kinds of vodka, pickled mushrooms, rye cakes made with buttermilk, honey in the comb, still mead and sparkling mead, apples, nuts (raw and toasted), and nut-and-honey sweets. Afterwards she brought a freshly roasted chicken, ham, preserves made with honey, and preserves made with sugar.

All this was the fruit of Anísyá Fëdorovna’s housekeeping, gathered and prepared by her. The smell and taste of it all had a smack of Anísyá Fëdorovna herself: a savor of juiciness, cleanliness, whiteness, and pleasant smiles.

“Take this, little Lady-Countess!” she kept saying, as she offered Natásha first one thing and then another.

Esther Forbes

Natásha ate of everything and thought she had never seen or eaten such buttermilk cakes, such aromatic jam, such honey-and-nut sweets, or such a chicken anywhere. Anísyá Fëdorovna left the room.

After supper, over their cherry brandy, Rostóv and “Uncle” talked of past and future hunts, of Rugáy and Ilágín’s dogs, while Natásha sat upright on the sofa and listened with sparkling eyes. She tried several times to wake Pétya that he might eat something, but he only muttered incoherent words without waking up. Natásha felt so light-hearted and happy in these novel surroundings that she only feared the trap would come for her too soon. After a casual pause, such as often occurs when receiving friends for the first time in one’s own house, “Uncle,” answering a thought that was in the visitors’ minds, said:

“This, you see, is how I am finishing my days. . . . Death will come. That’s it, come on! Nothing will remain. Then why harm anyone?”

“Uncle’s” face was very significant and even handsome as he said this. Involuntarily Rostóv recalled all the good he had heard about him from his father and the neighbors. Throughout the whole province “Uncle” had the reputation of being the most honorable and disinterested of cranks. They called him in to decide family disputes, chose him as executor, confided secrets to him, elected him to be a justice and to other posts; but he always persistently refused public appointments, passing the autumn and spring in the fields on his bay gelding, sitting at home in winter, and lying in his overgrown garden in summer.

“Why don’t you enter the service, Uncle?”

“I did once, but gave it up. I am not fit for it. That’s it, come on! I can’t make head or tail of it. That’s for you—I haven’t brains enough. Now, hunting is another matter—that’s it, come on! Open the door, there!” he shouted. “Why have you shut it?”

The door at the end of the passage led to the huntsmen’s room, as they called the room for the hunt servants.

There was a rapid patter of bare feet, and an unseen hand opened the door into the huntsmen’s room, from which came the clear sounds

A Day of Peace

of a balaláyka on which someone, who was evidently a master of the art, was playing. Natásha had been listening to those strains for some time and now went out into the passage to hear better.

“That’s Mítka, my coachman. . . . I have got him a good balaláyka. I’m fond of it,” said “Uncle.”

It was the custom for Mítka to play the balaláyka in the huntsmen’s room when “Uncle” returned from the chase. “Uncle” was fond of such music.

“How good! Really very good!” said Nicholas with some unintentional superciliousness, as if ashamed to confess that the sounds pleased him very much.

“Very good?” said Natásha reproachfully, noticing her brother’s tone. “Not ‘very good’—it’s simply delicious!”

Just as “Uncle’s” pickled mushrooms, honey, and cherry brandy had seemed to her the best in the world, so also that song, at that moment, seemed to her the acme of musical delight.

“More, please, more!” cried Natásha at the door as soon as the balaláyka ceased. Mítka tuned up afresh, and recommenced thrumming the balaláyka to the air of *My Lady*, with trills and variations. “Uncle” sat listening, slightly smiling, with his head on one side. The air was repeated a hundred times. The balaláyka was retuned several times and the same notes were thrummed again, but the listeners did not grow weary of it and wished to hear it again and again. Anísyá Fëdorovna came in and leaned her portly person against the doorpost.

“You like listening?” she said to Natásha, with a smile extremely like “Uncle’s.” “That’s a good player of ours,” she added.

“He doesn’t play that part right!” said “Uncle” suddenly, with an energetic gesture. “Here he ought to burst out—that’s it, come on!—ought to burst out.”

“Do you play then?” asked Natásha.

“Uncle” did not answer, but smiled.

“Anísyá, go and see if the strings of my guitar are all right. I haven’t touched it for a long time. That’s it—come on! I’ve given it up.”

Esther Forbes

Anísyá Fëdorovna, with her light step, willingly went to fulfill her errand and brought back the guitar.

Without looking at anyone, “Uncle” blew the dust off it, and, tapping the case with his bony fingers, tuned the guitar and settled himself in his armchair. He took the guitar a little above the finger-board, arching his left elbow with a somewhat theatrical gesture, and, with a wink at Anísyá Fëdorovna, struck a single chord, pure and sonorous, and then quietly, smoothly, and confidently began playing in very slow time, not *My Lady*, but the well-known song: *Came a maiden down the street*. The tune, played with precision, and in exact time, began to thrill in the hearts of Nicholas and Natásha, arousing in them the same kind of sober mirth as radiated from Anísyá Fëdorovna’s whole being. Anísyá Fëdorovna flushed, and drawing her kerchief over her face went laughing out of the room. “Uncle” continued to play correctly, carefully, with energetic firmness, looking with a changed and inspired expression at the spot where Anísyá Fëdorovna had just stood. Something seemed to be laughing a little on one side of his face under his gray mustaches, especially as the song grew brisker and the time quicker and when, here and there, as he ran his fingers over the strings, something seemed to snap.

“Lovely, lovely! Go on, Uncle, go on!” shouted Natásha as soon as he had finished. She jumped up and hugged and kissed him. “Nicholas, Nicholas!” she said, turning to her brother, as if asking him: “What is it moves me so?”

Nicholas too was greatly pleased by “Uncle’s” playing, and “Uncle” played the piece over again. Anísyá Fëdorovna’s smiling face reappeared in the doorway and behind hers other faces. . . .

Fetching water clear and sweet,
Stop, dear maiden, I entreat—

played “Uncle” once more, running his fingers skillfully over the strings, and then he stopped short and jerked his shoulders.

“Go on, Uncle dear,” Natásha wailed in an imploring tone as if her life depended on it.

“Uncle” rose, and it was as if there were two men in him: one of

A Day of Peace

them smiled seriously at the merry fellow, while the merry fellow struck a naïve and precise attitude preparatory to a folk dance.

“Now then, niece!” he exclaimed, waving to Natásha the hand that had just struck a chord.

Natásha threw off the shawl from her shoulders, ran forward to face “Uncle,” and setting her arms akimbo also made a motion with her shoulders and struck an attitude.

Where, how, and when had this young countess, educated by an émigrée French governess, imbibed from the Russian air she breathed that spirit and obtained that manner which the *pas de châle* [NOTE—*The shawl dance; a French dance, the style of which contrasts with the Russian folk dances*] would, one would have supposed, long ago have effaced? But the spirit and the movements were those inimitable and unteachable Russian ones that “Uncle” had expected of her. As soon as she had struck her pose, and smiled triumphantly, proudly, and with sly merriment, the fear that had at first seized Nicholas and the others that she might not do the right thing was at an end, and they were already admiring her.

She did the right thing with such precision, such complete precision, that Anísyá Fëdorovna, who had at once handed her the hand-kerchief she needed for the dance, had tears in her eyes, though she laughed as she watched this slim, graceful countess, reared in silks and velvets and so different from herself, who yet was able to understand all that was in Anísyá and in Anísyá’s father and mother and aunt, and in every Russian man and woman.

“Well, little countess; that’s it—come on!” cried “Uncle,” with a joyous laugh, having finished the dance. “Well done, niece! Now a fine young fellow must be found as husband for you. That’s it—come on!”

“He’s chosen already,” said Nicholas, smiling.

“Oh?” said “Uncle” in surprise, looking inquiringly at Natásha, who nodded her head with a happy smile.

“And such a one!” she said. But as soon as she had said it a new train of thoughts and feelings arose in her. “What did Nicholas’ smile mean when he said ‘chosen already’? Is he glad of it or not?

Esther Forbes

It is as if he thought my Bolkónski would not approve of or understand our gaiety. But he would understand it all. Where is he now?" she thought, and her face suddenly became serious. But this lasted only a second. "Don't dare to think about it," she said to herself, and sat down again smilingly beside "Uncle," begging him to play something more.

"Uncle" played another song and a valse; then after a pause he cleared his throat and sang his favorite hunting song:

As 'twas growing dark last night
Fell the snow so soft and light . . .

"Uncle" sang as peasants sing, with full and naïve conviction that the whole meaning of a song lies in the words and that the tune comes of itself, and that apart from the words there is no tune, which exists only to give measure to the words. As a result of this the unconsidered tune, like the song of a bird, was extraordinarily good. Natásha was in ecstasies over "Uncle's" singing. She resolved to give up learning the harp and to play only the guitar. She asked "Uncle" for his guitar and at once found the chords of the song.

After nine o'clock two traps and three mounted men, who had been sent to look for them, arrived to fetch Natásha and Pétya. The count and countess did not know where they were and were very anxious, said one of the men.

Pétya was carried out like a log and laid in the larger of the two traps. Natásha and Nicholas got into the other. "Uncle" wrapped Natásha up warmly and took leave of her with quite a new tenderness. He accompanied them on foot as far as the bridge that could not be crossed, so that they had to go round by the ford, and he sent huntsmen to ride in front with lanterns.

"Good-by, dear niece," his voice called out in the darkness—not the voice Natásha had known previously, but the one that had sung *As 'twas growing dark last night*.

In the village through which they passed there were red lights and a cheerful smell of smoke.

A Day of Peace

“What a darling Uncle is!” said Natásha, when they had come out onto the highroad.

“Yes,” returned Nicholas. “You’re not cold?”

“No, I’m quite, quite all right. I feel so comfortable!” answered Natásha, almost perplexed by her feelings. They remained silent a long while. The night was dark and damp. They could not see the horses, but only heard them splashing through the unseen mud.

What was passing in that réceptive childlike soul that so eagerly caught and assimilated all the diverse impressions of life? How did they all find place in her? But she was very happy. As they were nearing home she suddenly struck up the air of *As 'twas growing dark last night*—the tune of which she had all the way been trying to get and had at last caught.

“Got it?” said Nicholas.

“What were you thinking about just now, Nicholas?” inquired Natásha.

They were fond of asking one another that question.

“I?” said Nicholas, trying to remember. “Well, you see, first I thought that Rugáy, the red hound, was like Uncle, and that if he were a man he would always keep Uncle near him, if not for his riding, then for his manner. What a good fellow Uncle is! Don’t you think so? . . . Well, and you?”

“I? Wait a bit, wait. . . . Yes, first I thought that we are driving along and imagining that we are going home, but that heaven knows where we are really going in the darkness, and that we shall arrive and suddenly find that we are not in Otrádnoe, but in Fairyland. And then I thought . . . No, nothing else.”

“I know, I expect you thought of him,” said Nicholas, smiling as Natásha knew by the sound of his voice.

“No,” said Natásha, though she had in reality been thinking about Prince Andrew at the same time as of the rest, and of how he would have liked “Uncle.” “And then I was saying to myself all the way, ‘How well Anísyá carried herself, how well!’” And Nicholas heard her spontaneous, happy, ringing laughter. “And do you know,” she

Esther Forbes

suddenly said, "I know that I shall never again be as happy and tranquil as I am now."

"Rubbish, nonsense, humbug!" exclaimed Nicholas, and he thought: "How charming this Natásha of mine is! I have no other friend like her and never shall have. Why should she marry? We might always drive about together!"

"What a darling this Nicholas of mine is!" thought Natásha.

"Ah, there are still lights in the drawing room!" she said, pointing to the windows of the house that gleamed invitingly in the moist velvety darkness of the night.

WILLA CATHER:

"I wish I had written

The Mary Gloster

by RUDYARD KIPLING"

Miss Cather, novelist, poet, essayist and short story writer, belongs to the circle of important American authors whose books are always awaited by an eager public. While Miss Cather is popularly known for her novels DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP, SHADOWS ON THE ROCK, O PIONEERS and the Pulitzer Prize winning ONE OF OURS, many of her readers will recall her volume of poetry, APRIL TWILIGHT and other books.

I've paid for your sickest fancies; I've humoured your crackedest whim—

Dick, it's your daddy—dying: you've got to listen to him!
Good for a fortnight, am I? The doctor told you? He lied.
I shall go under by morning, and—Put that nurse outside.
'Never seen death yet, Dickie? Well, now is your time to learn,
And you'll wish you held my record before it comes to your turn.
Not counting the Line and the Foundry, the yards and the village,
too,

I've made myself and a million; but I'm damned if I made you.
Master at two-and-twenty, and married at twenty-three—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll, and forty freighters at sea!
Fifty years between 'em, and every year of it fight,
And now I'm Sir Anthony Gloster, dying, a baronite:
For I lunched with His Royal 'Ighness—what was it the papers
a-had?

From THE SEVEN SEAS, copyright, 1896, by Rudyard Kipling, reprinted by permission of Mrs. G. Bambridge, Doubleday and Company, Inc., and The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd.

Willa Cather

"Not least of our merchant-princes." Dickie, that's me, your dad!
I didn't begin with askings. I took my job and I stuck;
And I took the chances they wouldn't, an' now they're calling it luck.
Lord, what boats I've handled—rotten and leaky and old!
Ran 'em, or—opened the bilge-cock, precisely as I was told.
Grub that 'ud bind you crazy, and crews that 'ud turn you gray,
And a big fat lump of insurance to cover the risk on the way.
The others they duresn't do it; they said they valued their life
(They've served me since as skippers). I went, and I took my wife.
Over the world I drove 'em, married at twenty-three,
And your mother saving the money and making a man of me.
I was content to be master, but she said there was better behind;
She took the chances I wouldn't, and I followed your mother blind.
She egged me to borrow the money, an' she helped me clear the loan,
When we bought half shares in a cheap 'un and hoisted a flag of our
own.

Patching and coaling on credit, and living the Lord knew how,
We started the Red Ox freighters—we've eight-and-thirty now.
And those were the days of clippers, and the freights were clipper-
freights,

And we knew we were making our fortune, but she died in Macassar
Straits—

By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank—
And we dropped her in fourteen fathom; I pricked it off where she
sank.

Owners we were, full owners, and the boat was christened for her,
And she died out there in childbed. My heart, how young we were!
So I went on a spree round Java and well-nigh ran her ashore,
But your mother came and warned me and I wouldn't liquor no
more.

Strict I stuck to my business, afraid to stop or I'd think,
Saving the money (she warned me), and letting the other men drink.
And I met McCullough in London (I'd saved five 'undred then),
And 'tween us we started the Foundry—three forges and twenty men:
Cheap repairs for the cheap 'uns. It paid, and the business grew,

The Mary Gloster

For I bought me a steam-lathe patent, and that was a gold mine too.
“Cheaper to build ‘em than buy ‘em,” *I* said, but McCullough he shied,

And we wasted a year in talking before we moved to the Clyde.
And the Lines were all beginning, and we all of us started fair,
Building our engines like houses and staying the boilers square.
But McCullough ‘e wanted cabins with marble and maple and all,
And Brussels and Utrecht velvet, and baths and a Social Hall,
And pipes for closets all over, and cutting the frames too light.
But McCullough he died in the Sixties, and—Well, I’m dying to-night. . . .

I knew—I knew what was coming, when we bid on the *Byfleet’s* keel.
They piddled and piffled with iron: I’d given my orders for steel.
Steel and the first expansions. It paid, I tell, it paid,
When we came with our nine-knot freighters and collared the long-run trade.

And they asked me how I did it, and I gave ‘em the Scripture text,
“You keep your light so shining a little in front o’ the next!”
They copied all they could follow, but they couldn’t copy my mind,
And I left ‘em sweating and stealing a year and a half behind.
Then came the armour-contracts, but that was McCullough’s side;
He was always best in the Foundry, but better, perhaps, he died.
I went through his private papers; the notes was plainer than print;
And I’m no fool to finish if a man’ll give me a hint.

(I remember his widow was angry.) So I saw what the drawings meant,

And I started the six-inch rollers, and it paid me sixty per cent.
Sixty per cent *with* failures, and more than twice we could do,
And a quarter-million to credit, and I saved it all for you.
I thought—it doesn’t matter—you seemed to favour your ma,
But you’re nearer forty than thirty, and I know the kind you are.
Harrer an’ Trinity College! I ought to ha’ sent you to sea—
But I stood you an education, an’ what have you done for me?
The things I knew was proper you wouldn’t thank me to give,
And the things I knew was rotten you said was the way to live;

Willa Cather

For you muddled with books and pictures, an' china an' etchin's an' fans,

And your rooms at college was beastly—more like a whore's than a man's—

Till you married that thin-flanked woman, as white and as stale as a bone,

And she gave you your social nonsense; but where's that kid o' your own?

I've seen your carriages blocking the half of the Cromwell Road,
But never the doctor's brougham to help the missus unload.

(So there isn't even a grandchild, an' the Gloster family's done.)

Not like your mother, she isn't. *She* carried her freight each run.

But they died, the pore little beggars! At sea she had 'em—they died.

Only you, an' you stood it; you haven't stood much beside—

Weak, a liar, and idle, and mean as a collier's whelp

Nosing for scraps in the galley. No help—my son was no help!

So he gets three 'undred thousand, in trust and the interest paid.

I wouldn't give it you, Dickie—you see, I made it in trade.

You're saved from soiling your fingers, and if you have no child,

It all comes back to the business. Gad, won't your wife be wild!

Calls and calls in her carriage, her 'andkerchief up to 'er eye:

"Daddy! dear daddy's dyin'!" and doing her best to cry.

Grateful? Oh, yes, I'm grateful, but keep 'er away from here.

Your mother 'ud never ha' stood 'er, and, anyhow, women are queer. . . .

There's women will say I've married a second time. Not quite!

But give pore Aggie a hundred, and tell her your lawyers'll fight.

She was the best o' the boiling—you'll meet her before it ends;

I'm in for a row with the mother—I'll leave you settle my friends:

For a man he must go with a woman, which women don't understand—

Or the sort that say they can see it they aren't the marrying brand.

But I wanted to speak o' your mother that's Lady Gloster still.

I'm going to up and see her, without it's hurting the will.

The Mary Gloster

Here! Take your hand off the bell-pull. Five thousand's waiting for you.

If you'll only listen a minute, and do as I bid you do.

They'll try to prove me a loony, and, if you bungle, they can;

And I've only you to trust to! (O God, why ain't he a man?)

There's some waste money on marbles, the same as McCullough tried—

Marbles and mausoleums—but I call that sinful pride.

There's some ship bodies for burial—we've carried 'em, soldered and packed;

Down in their wills they wrote it, and nobody called *them* cracked.

But me—I've too much money, and people might. . . . All my fault:

It come o' hoping for grandsons and buying that Wokin' vault.

I'm sick o' the 'ole dam' business; I'm going back where I came.

Dick, you're the son o' my body, and you'll take charge o' the same!

I'm going to lie by your mother, ten thousand mile away,

And they'll want to send me to Woking; and that's where you'll earn your pay.

I've thought it out on the quiet, the same as it ought to be done—

Quiet, and decent, and proper—an' here's your orders, my son.

You know the Line? You don't, though. You write to the Board, and tell

Your father's death has upset you an' you're goin' to cruise for a spell,

An' you'd like the Mary Gloster—I've held her ready for this—

They'll put her in working order an' you'll take her out as she is.

Yes, it was money idle when I patched her and put her aside

(Thank God, I can pay for my fancies!)—the boat where your mother died,

By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank,

We dropped her—I think I told you—and I pricked it off where she sank.

[Tiny she looked on the grating—that oily, treacly sea—]

Hundred and eighteen East, remember, and South just three.

Willa Cather

Easy bearings to carry—three South—three to the dot;
But I gave McAndrews a copy in case of dying—or not.
And so you'll write to McAndrews, he's Chief of the Maori Line;
They'll give him leave, if you ask 'em and say it's business o' mine.
I built three boats for the Maoris, an' very well pleased they were,
An' I've known Mac since the Fifties, and Mac knew me—and her.
After the first stroke warned me I sent him the money to keep
Against the time you'd claim it, committin' your dad to the deep;
For you are the son o' my body, and Mac was my oldest friend,
I've never asked 'im to dinner, but he'll see it out to the end.
Stiff-necked Glasgow beggar, I've heard he's prayed for my soul,
But he couldn't lie if you paid him, and he'd starve before he stole.
He'll take the Mary in ballast—you'll find her a lively ship;
And you'll take Sir Anthony Gloster, that goes on his wedding-trip,
Lashed in our old deck-cabin with all three portholes wide,
The kick o' the screw beneath him and the round blue seas outside!
Sir Anthony Gloster's carriage—our 'ouse flag flyin' free—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll and forty freighters at sea!
He made himself and a million, but this world is a fleetin' show,
And he'll go to the wife of 'is bosom the same as he ought to go.
By the heel of the Paternosters—there isn't a chance to mistake—
And Mac'll pay you the money as soon as the bubbles break!
Five thousand for six weeks' cruising, the stanchest freighter afloat,
And Mac he'll give you your bonus the minute I'm out o' the boat!
He'll take you round to Macassar, and you'll come back alone;
He knows what I want o' the Mary. . . . I'll do what I please with
my own.

Your mother 'ud call it wasteful, but I've seven-and-thirty more;
I'll come in my private carriage and bid it wait at the door. . . .
For my son 'e was never a credit: 'e muddled with books and art,
And 'e lived on Sir Anthony's money and 'e broke Sir Anthony's
heart.

There isn't even a grandchild, and the Gloster family's done—
The only one you left me, O mother, the only one!
Harrer an' Trinity College! Me slavin' early an' late,

The Mary Gloster

An' he thinks I'm dyin' crazy, and you're in Macassar Strait!
Flesh o' my flesh, my dearie, for ever an' ever amen,
That first stroke come for a warning; I ought to ha' gone to you then,
But—cheap repairs for a cheap 'un—the doctors said I'd do:
Mary, why didn't *you* warn me? I've allus heeded to you.
Excep'—I know—about women; but you are a spirit now;
An', wife, they was only women, and I was a man. That's how.
An' a man 'e must go with a woman, as you could not understand;
But I never talked 'em secrets. I paid 'em out o' hand.
Thank Gawd, I can pay for my fancies. Now what's five thousand
to me,

For a berth off the Paternosters in the haven where I would be?
I believe in the Resurrection, if I read my Bible plain,
But I wouldn't trust 'em at Wokin'; we're safer at sea again.
For the heart it shall go with the treasure—go down to the sea in
ships.

I'm sick of the hired women—I'll kiss my girl on her lips!
I'll be content with my fountain, I'll drink from my own well,
And the wife of my youth shall charm me—an' the rest can go to
Hell!

(Dickie, *he* will, that's certain.) I'll lie in our standin'-bed,
An' Mac'll take her in ballast—an' she trims best by the head. . . .
Down by the head an' sinkin'. Her fires are drawn and cold,
And the water's splashin' hollow on the skin of the empty hold—
Churning an' choking and chuckling, quiet and scummy and dark—
Full to her lower hatches and risin' steady. Hark!
That was the after-bulkhead. . . . she's flooded from stem to
stern. . . .

Never seen death yet, Dickie? . . . Well, now is your time to
learn!

ROBERT NATHAN:

"I wish I had written

Glamour

by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT"

Robert Nathan, whose novels and poetry seem to be touched by the music that is inherently his as a composer, has written ONE MORE SPRING, PORTRAIT OF JENNIE, THE ENCHANTED VOYAGE and THE SEA-GULL CRY among other books. Mr. Nathan feels that this Stephen Vincent Benét story "is one of the most haunting stories I've ever read: full of that sense of longing and of waste, that morning and evening loveliness and loneliness which fills the heart of youth."

I USED to read quite a lot of books when I was younger, but now they just make me sore. Marian keeps on bringing them back from the lending library and, occasionally, I'll pick one up and read a few chapters, but sooner or later you're bound to strike something that makes you sick. I don't mean dirt or anything—just foolishness, and people acting the way they never act. Of course, the books she reads are mostly love stories. I suppose they're the worst kind.

But what I understand least is the money angle. It takes money to get drunk and it takes money to go around with a girl—at least that's been my experience. But the people in those books seem to have invented a special kind of money—it only gets spent on a party or a trip. The rest of the time they might as well be paying their bills with wampum, as far as you can figure it out.

Of course, often enough, the people in books are poor. But then they're so darn poor, it's crazy. And, often enough, just when everything's at its worst, some handy little legacy comes along and the new

"Glamour," copyright, 1932, by The Butterick Company. From: SELECTED WORKS OF STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT, published by Rinehart and Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Brandt & Brandt, agents for the Benét Estate.

life opens out before them right away, like a great big tulip. Well, I only had one legacy in my life and I know what I did with that. It darn near ruined me.

Uncle Bannard died up in Vermont in 1924, and when his estate was settled, it came to \$1237.62 apiece for Lou and me. Lou's husband put her share in Greater Los Angeles real estate—they live out on the Coast—and I guess they've done pretty well. But I took mine and quit the firm I was with, Rosenberg and Jenkins, mechanical toys and novelties, and went to Brooklyn to write a novel.

It sounds crazy, looking back on it. But I was a bug about reading and writing in those days, and I'd done some advertising copy for the firm that pulled. And that was the time when everybody was getting steamed up about "the new American writers," and it looked like a game without much overhead. I'd just missed the war—I was seventeen when it finished—and I'd missed college because of father's death. In fact, I hadn't done much of anything I really wanted since I had to quit high school—though the novelty business was all right as businesses go. So when I got a chance to cut loose, I cut.

I figured I could easily live a year on the twelve hundred, and, at first, I thought of France. But there'd be the nuisance of learning frog-talk and the passage there and back. Besides, I wanted to be near a big library. My novel was going to be about the American Revolution, if you can picture it. I'd read "Henry Esmond" over and over and I wanted to write a book like that.

I guess it must have been a bunch of my New England ancestors that picked Brooklyn for me. They were pioneers, all right—but, gosh, how they hated to take any chance but a big one! And I'm like that myself. I like to feel tidy in my mind when I'm taking a chance.

I figured I could be as solitary in Brooklyn as I could in Pisa, and a lot more comfortable. I knew how many words it took to make a novel—I'd counted some of them—so I bought enough paper and a second-hand typewriter and pencils and erasers. That about cleaned out my ready cash. I swore I wouldn't touch the legacy till I was really at work. But I felt like a million dollars—I swear I felt as if

Robert Nathan

I were looking for treasure—when I got into the subway that shiny autumn day, and started across the river to look for a room.

It may have been my ancestors that sent me to Brooklyn, but I don't know what landed me at Mrs. Forge's. Old Wrestling Southgate, the one who was bothered with witches, would probably have called it a flowered snare of the fiend. And I'm not so sure, looking back, that he'd have been wrong.

Mrs. Forge opened the door herself—Serena was out. They'd talked about putting an ad in the paper but they'd just never got around to it; and, naturally, they wouldn't have put up a card. If it hadn't looked like the sort of house I'd wanted, I'd never have rung the bell. As it was, when she came to the door, I thought that I had made a mistake. So the first thing I did was beg her pardon.

She had on her black silk dress—the one with the white ruffles—just as if she were going out calling in the barouche. The minute she started to speak, I knew she was Southern. They all had that voice. I won't try to describe it. There's nothing worse than a whiny one—it beats the New England twang. But theirs didn't whine. They made you think of the sun and long afternoons and slow rivers—and time, time, time, just sliding along like a current, not going anywhere particular, but gay.

I think she liked my begging her pardon; for she took me in and gave me a slice of fruit cake and some lemonade. And I listened to her talk and felt, somehow, as if I'd been frozen for a long time and was just beginning to get warm. There was always a pitcher of lemonade in the ice-box, though the girls drank "coke," mostly. I've seen them come in from the snow, in the dead of winter, and drink it. They didn't think much of the cold, anyway, so they more or less pretended it didn't exist. They were that way.

The room was exactly what I wanted—big and sunny, with an outlook over a little backyard where there was the wreck of a forsythia bush and some spindly grass. I've forgotten to say the house was in one of those old-fashioned side-streets, not far from Prospect Park. But it doesn't matter where it was. It must be gone, now.

You know, it took all my nerve to ask Mrs. Forge the price. She

was very polite, but she made me feel like a guest. I don't know if you can understand that. And then she couldn't tell me.

"Well, now, Mr. Southgate," she said, in that soft, gentle, helpless voice that ran on as inexorably as water. "I wish my daughter Eva had been here to receive you. My daughter Eva has accepted a business position since we came here for my daughter Melissa's art training. And I said, only this morning, 'Eva, honey, suppose Serena's away and some young person comes here, askin' for that room. I'll be bound to say somethin' to them, sugar, and I'll feel right embarrassed.' But just then some little boys started shoutin' down the street and I never did rightly hear what she answered. So if you're in a hurry, Mr. Southgate, I don't just know what we can do."

"I could leave a deposit," I said. I'd noticed, by this time, that the black silk had a tear in it and that she was wearing a pair of run-down ball-slippers—incredibly small they were. But, all the same, she looked like a duchess.

"Why, I suppose you could, Mr. Southgate," she said, with an obvious lack of interest. "I suppose that would be businesslike. You gentlemen in the North are always so interested in business. I recollect Mr. Forge sayin' before he died, 'Call them d—— Yankees if you like, Milly, but we've all got to live in the same country and I've met some without horns.' Mr. Forge was always so humorous. So, you see, we're quite accustomed to Northerners. You don't happen to be kin to the Mobile Southgates, do you, Mr. Southgate? You'll excuse an old lady's askin'—but you seem to favor them a little, now your face is in the light."

I'm not trying to put down just the way she talked—she didn't say "ah" and "nah"—it was something lighter and suaver. But her talk went on like that. They all did it. It wasn't nervousness or trying to impress you. They found it as easy and restful to talk as most of us do to keep still; and, if the talk never got anywhere, they'd never expected it would. It was like a drug—it made life into a dream. And, of course, it isn't that.

Finally, I simply went for my stuff and moved in. I didn't know how much I was paying or what meals would be included in it, but

Robert Nathan

I somehow felt that these things would be shown unto me when the time was ripe. That's what an hour and a half with Mrs. Forge did to me. But I did resolve to have a clear understanding with "my daughter, Eva," who seemed to be the business head of the family.

Serena let me in when I came back. I gave her fifty cents to get in her good graces and she took an instant dislike to me which never wavered. She was small and black and withered, with bright little sparks of eyes. I don't know how long she'd been with them, but I thought of her growing on the family, like mistletoe, from immemorial time.

Whenever I heard her singing in the kitchen, I felt as if she were putting a private curse on me. "Honey-bird—" she'd croon—"honey-bird, no one gwine tuh fly away wid mah honey-bird. Ole buzzard, he try his wings—he flap and he flap—man wid a gun he see him—hi, hi, hi—shoot ole buzzard wid a buckshot and never tetch mah honey-bird."

I knew who the old buzzard was, all right. And it may sound funny—but it wasn't. It was spooky. Eva wouldn't see it; they'd all treat Serena like a combination of unavoidable nuisance and troublesome child. I don't understand how they can treat servants that way. I mean friendly and grand at the same time. It isn't natural.

It sounds as if I were trying to keep from telling about Eva. I don't know why I'm doing that.

I got unpacked and pretty well settled. My room was on the third floor, back, but I could hear the girls coming home. There'd be the door and steps and a voice saying, "Honey, I'm so tired—I'm just plumb dragged out," and Mrs. Forge saying, "Now, honey, you rest yourself." There were three of those. I kind of wondered why they were all so tired. Later on, I found that was just something they said.

But then Mrs. Forge would begin to talk and they wouldn't be tired any more. They'd be quite excited and there'd be a good deal of laughter. I began to feel very uncomfortable. And then I got stubborn. After all, I'd rented the room.

So, when Eva finally knocked at the door, I just grunted, "Come in!" the way you would to a chamber-maid. She opened the door and

stood in the doorway, hesitant. I imagine Melissa had bet her she wouldn't have the nerve.

"Mr. Southgate, I believe?" she said, quite vaguely, as if I might be anything from a cloud to a chest of drawers.

"Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" I said. There was an old picture on the wall—the two Englishmen meeting formally in the middle of a paper jungle. But I'll hand her something—she saw I wasn't trying to be fresh.

"I reckon we have been making a lot of racket," she said. "But that's mostly Melissa. She never was rightly raised. Won't you give us the favor of your company downstairs, Mr. Southgate? We-all don't act crazy. We just sound like it."

She was dark, you know, and yet she had that white skin. There's a kind of flower called freesia—when the petals are very white, they have the color of her skin. And there's a strong sweetness to it—strong and ghostly at the same time. It smells like spring with the ghosts in it, between afternoon and dusk. And there's a word they call glamour. It was there.

She had small white teeth and red lips. There was one little freckle in the hollow of her throat—I don't know how she happened to have only one. Louisa was the beauty and Melissa the artist. They'd settled it that way. I couldn't have fallen in love with Louisa or Melissa. And yet, I liked to see them all together—the three sisters—I'd liked to have lived in a big, cool house by a river and spent my life seeing them all together. What fool thoughts you get, when you're young! I'd be the Northern cousin who managed the place. I used to send myself to sleep with it, every night, for months.

Mrs. Forge wasn't in it, or Serena. It was a big place—it went on for miles and miles. Most of the land wasn't good for much and the Negroes were bone-lazy, but I made them work. I'd get up in the first mist of morning and be in the saddle all day, overseeing and planning. But, always, I'd be coming back, on a tired horse, up that flowery avenue and they'd be waiting for me on the porch, the three white dresses bunched like a bouquet.

They'd be nice to me, because I was weary, and I'd go upstairs to

Robert Nathan

the room looking over the river and change out of my hot clothes and wash. Then Eva would send me up a long drink with mint in it and I'd take it slowly. After supper, when I wasn't doing accounts, they'd sing or we'd all play some foolish sort of round game with ivory counters. I guess I got most of it out of books, but it was very real to me. That's one trouble with books—you get things out of them.

Often we got old, but it never seemed to change us much. Once in a while the other girls were married and, sometimes, I married Eva. But we never had any children and none of us ever moved away. I kept on working like a dog and they accepted it and I was content. We had quite a few neighbors, at first, but I got tired of that. So I made it a river island you could only reach by boat, and that was more satisfactory.

It wasn't a dream, you know, or anything sappy like that. I just made it up in my head. Toward the end of the year, I'd lie awake for hours, making it up, but it never seemed to tire me. I never really told Eva about it at all, not even when we were engaged. Maybe it would have made a difference, but I don't think so.

She wasn't the kind of person you'd tell any dreams to. She was in the dream. I don't mean she was noble or fatal or like a ghost. I've had her in my arms and she was warm and alive and you could have had children by her, because things are that way. But that wasn't the point—that wasn't the point at all.

She didn't even have much imagination. None of them had. They just lived, like trees. They didn't plan or foresee. I've spent hours trying to explain to Mrs. Forge that, if you had ten dollars, it wasn't just ten dollars, it was something you could put in a savings bank. She'd listen, very politely. But ten dollars, to her, was just something that went away. They thought it was fine if you had money, but they thought it was equally fine if you had a good-looking nose. Money was rather like rain to them—it fell or it didn't—and, they knew that there wasn't any way to make it rain.

I'm sure they'd never have come North at all, if it hadn't been for some obscure family dispute. They often seemed to wonder about it

themselves. And I heard the dispute talked about dozens of times but I never really got the gist of it, except that it was connected with two things, the new spur-track to the turpentine plant, and Cousin Belle. "Cousin Belle, she just acted so mean—she gave up her manners," Mrs. Forge would say, placidly. "She left us no reco'se, Bannard—no reco'se at all." And then the girls would chime in. I suppose they got the money to come North from selling land to the turpentine plant, but even of that I am not sure.

Anyhow, they had golden visions, as they would have. Louisa was going to be a great actress and Melissa a great artist—and Eva—I don't know exactly what Eva expected, even now. But it was something. And it was all going to happen without any real work, it was going to fall from a cloud. Oh, yes, Melissa and Louisa went to classes and Eva had a job, but those, you felt, were stop-gaps. They were passing the time till the cloud opened and the manna fell.

I'll say this for them—it didn't seem to hurt them to have their visions fail. The only person it really hurt was me.

Because I believed them, at first. How could I help it? The dream I had wasn't so wrong. They were living on an island—an island in the middle of Brooklyn—a piece of where they came from. People came to the house—art students and such—there were always plenty of young men. But, once inside the house, they submitted to the house. Serena would pass the cold ham, at supper, and you'd look out of the window and be surprised to find it snowing, for the window should have been open and the warm night coming through. I don't know what roomers they'd ever had before, but in my time there was only myself and Mr. Budd. He was a fat little clerk of fifty, very respectable, and he stayed because of the food, for Serena was a magnificent, wasteful cook.

Yes, I believed it. I believed in it all. It was like an enchantment. It was glamour. I believed in all they said and I saw them all going back to Chantry—the three famous sisters with their three distinguished husbands—like people in a fairy-tale.

We'd all have breakfast together, but the only person who talked much then was Mr. Budd. The Forges never were properly alive till

Robert Nathan

later in the day. At breakfast, you saw them through a veil. Sometimes I'd feel my heart beat, staring at Eva, because she looked like one of those shut flowers in greenhouses—something shut and mysterious so you fairly held your breath, waiting for it to open. I suppose it was just because she took a long time to wake up.

Then Mr. Budd and the girls would go away, and, when my bed was made, I'd go up and work. I'm not saying much about the novel, but I worked hard on it. I'd made a little chart on cardboard with 365 squares and each day I'd ink one in.

I'd go out for lunch and take a walk afterwards. A man has to have regular exercise, and that's free. Then I'd work some more, until they started to come home. I couldn't work after that—not after the first months. But I'd make myself not listen for Eva's step.

The first time I kissed Eva was the New Year's party. One of Louisa's beaus had brought some red wine and we were singing and fooling around. Serena was off for the evening and Eva and I were out in the kitchen, looking for clean glasses. We were both feeling gay and it just seemed natural. I didn't even think of it again till the next afternoon, when we'd all gone to the movies. And then I suddenly began to shake all over, as if I had a chill, remembering, and she said, "What is it, honey?" and her hand slipped into my hand.

That was how it began. And that night I started inventing the river plantation. And I'm not a fool and I've been around. But I held hands with that girl through January, February, and most of March before I really kissed her again. I can't explain it at all. She wasn't being coy or mean or trying to fight me. It was as if we were floating downstream in a boat together, and it was so pleasant to look at her and be near her, you didn't need any more. The pain hadn't started, then.

And yet, all through that time, something in me was fighting, fighting, to get out of the boat, to get away from the river. It wasn't my river at all, you know. It never was. And part of me knew it. But, when you're in love, you haven't got common sense.

By the end of March, the novel was more than half finished. I'd allowed two months for revision and making contacts, which seemed

sensible. And, one evening, it was cold, and Eva and I took a walk in the park. And when we came in, Mrs. Forge made us some hot cocoa—the other girls had gone to bed early, for once—and, while we were drinking it, Mrs. Forge fell asleep in her chair. And we put down our cups, as if it were a signal, and kissed—and the house was very quiet and we could hear her breathing, like sleep itself, through the long kiss.

Next morning, I woke up and the air felt warm and, when I looked out in the yard, there were leaves on the forsythia bush. Eva was just the same at breakfast, shut and mysterious, and I was just the same. But, when I went up to work, I shook my fist at old Wrestling Southgate, the fellow that was bothered with witches. Because I was going to marry Eva, and he could go to grass.

I tell you, they didn't plan or foresee. I told Mrs. Forge very straight just how I stood—finances and everything—and they treated it like a party. They were all as kind and excited as they could be, except Serena. She just refused to believe it and sang a lot more about buzzards. And, somehow or other, that made me feel queerer than ever. Because I knew Serena hated me but I knew she was a real person. I could understand her, she was close to the ground. And I loved the others but I didn't understand them, and sometimes I wouldn't be sure they were quite real. It was that way with Eva, even though we were in love.

I could kiss her but I couldn't be sure that she was always there when I kissed her. It wasn't coldness, it was merely another climate. I could talk for hours about what we were going to do when we were married and every time I stopped she'd say, "Go on, honey, it makes me feel so nice to hear you talk." But she'd have been as pleased if I'd sung it instead. God knows I didn't expect her to understand the novelty business, or even writing. But, sometimes, I'd honestly feel as if we didn't speak the same language. Which was foolish, because she wasn't foreign.

I remember getting angry with her one evening because I found out she was still writing to this boy friend, down South, and hadn't even told him about us. She opened her eyes very wide.

Robert Nathan

“Why, honey,” she said, in the most reasonable of voices, “I couldn’t stop writing Furfew right off like that. I’ve just always been sort of engaged to Furfew.”

“Well, now you’re engaged to me,” I said.

“I know,” she said. “That’s why I can’t stop writing him, honey. It would hurt Furfew something dreadful if he knew I had to stop writing him because I was engaged to you.”

“Look here,” I said, wondering which of us was crazy, “are we going to be married?”

“Of co’se, honey.”

“Then what,” I said, “has this Furfew got to do with it? Are you engaged to him or me?”

“Of co’se I’m engaged to you, honey, and we’re going to get married. But Furfew, he’s kind of like kin, and we been engaged a long time. It seems right mean and uncivil to break off with him short like that.”

“I don’t believe it,” I said, “I don’t believe there are any Furfews. It sounds like something you grow under glass. What’s he like?”

She thought for a long time.

“He’s right cute,” she said finally. “But he’s got a little doin’s of a black moustache.”

I managed to find out, however, that he owned the turpentine plant and was considered quite the John D. Rockefeller of Chantry. I was so used to no one in Chantry ever having any money that was worth anything, that this came as an unpleasing surprise. After that, Furfew used to try to come to the river plantation in a very shiny motor-launch with a red-and-white awning and I would warn him off with a shotgun.

But then the money business began. You like to give a girl presents when you’re in love—you like to do things right. Well, Lord knows, Eva was no gold-digger—she was as likely to be pleased with a soda as a pair of imported gloves. On the other hand, she was as likely to be pleased with the gloves.

I kept on schedule with the work, but I couldn’t with the money. Each week, I’d be just a little over the line. I tell you, the people

in books don't know about money. The people who write them can tell what it's like to be broke. But they don't tell what it's like to go around with clothes enough to cover you and food enough to satisfy you, and still have your heart's desire depend on money you haven't got.

Sure, I could have gone back in the novelty business and Eva could have kept on working. That would have been right for nine people out of ten. But it wouldn't have been right for the way I felt about Eva. It can be like that.

I wanted to come to her—oh, like a rescuer, I suppose. Like a prince, like the Northern cousin that saved the plantation. I didn't want to make the best of things—I wanted it all. You can't compromise with glamour. Or that's the way I feel.

Besides, I'd put in eight months' work on that novel and it didn't seem sensible to throw it all away. It might be a ladder to climb out on. It might have been.

Eva never complained, but she never understood. She'd just say we could all go back and live in Chantry. Well, I'm not that kind of man. If it had only been the river plantation! But, by now, I knew Chantry as well as if I'd been born there, and there wasn't a thing for me to do. Except maybe a job in Furfew's turpentine plant. And wouldn't that have been pretty?

Then, gradually, I got to know that the Forges, too, were almost at the end of their string. I had to get it casually—they never talked about those things directly. But when you keep on spending what you've got, there comes a time when you don't have it any more. Only, it always surprised them. I wish I was built that way.

It was the middle of July by this time, and one Saturday afternoon Eva came home and said she'd been let off at her office. They were cutting down the staff. I'd just been going over my accounts, and when she told me that, I started laughing as if I couldn't stop.

She looked rather surprised at first, but then she laughed, too.

"Why, honey," she said, "you're the killin'est. You always take things so serious. And then, sometimes, you don't take them serious a bit."

Robert Nathan

"It's an old Northern custom," I said. "They call it 'Laugh, clown, laugh.' For God's sake, Eva, what are we going to do?"

"Why, honey," she said, "I suppose I could get me another position." She never told me it was up to me. She never would have. "But I just sort of despise those mean old offices. Do you think I ought to get me another position, honey?"

"Oh, darling, it doesn't matter," I said, still laughing. "Nothing matters but us."

"That's mighty sweet of you, honey," she said and she looked relieved. "That's just the way I feel. And, when we get married, we'll fix things up right nice for Melissa and Louisa, won't we? And mother, of co'se, because she just can't stand Cousin Belle."

"Sure," I said. "Sure. When we're married, we'll fix up everything." And we went out in the backyard to look at the forsythia bush. But that night, Furfew brought his launch inshore and landed on the lower end of the island. He pitched camp there, and I could see his fire at night, through a glass.

I can't describe the next two months very well. They were all mixed up, the reality and the dream. Melissa and Louisa had to give up their classes, so we were all home, and lots of people came to the house. Some of them were callers and some of them were bill-collectors but, whoever they were, they generally stayed to a meal. Serena never minded that, she liked company. I remember paying a grocery bill, with almost the last of my legacy, toward the end. There were eight hams on the bill and ten cases of "coke." It hadn't been paid for a long time.

Often, we'd all pile into an old Ford that belonged to one of the art students and go down to a public beach for the day. Eva didn't care so much about swimming but she loved to lie in the sand. And I'd lie beside her, painfully happy, and we'd hardly say anything at all. My God, but she was beautiful against those beach colors—the clear greens of the water and the hot white and tan of the sand. But then, she was just as beautiful, sitting in the plush rocker in the front parlor, under that green lamp.

They say the time between the Ordinance of Secession and the

firing on Sumter was one of the gayest seasons Charleston ever had. I can understand that. They'd come to the brink of something, and fate was out of their hands. I got to feel that way.

Everything mixed, I tell you, everything mixed. I'd be sitting on the beach with Eva and, at the same time, I'd be riding around the river plantation, getting reports from my foreman and planning years ahead. I got to love that place. Even toward the end, it was safe, it didn't change. Of course, we kept having more and more trouble with Furfew; he kept extending his lines from the lower end of the island, but it never came to actual warfare—just fights between our men.

Meanwhile, I finished the novel and started revising it. And sometimes Eva would say why didn't we get married, anyway, and I knew we couldn't. You can't get married without some future ahead of you. So we started having arguments, and that was bad.

Why didn't I just seduce her like the big, brave heroes in books? Well, there were times when I thought it might be the answer for both of us. But it never happened. It wasn't shame or good principles. It just isn't so awfully easy to seduce a dream.

I knew they were writing letters but I didn't want to know any more. I knew the legacy was gone and my savings account was going, but I didn't care. I just wanted things to go on.

Finally, I heard that Furfew was coming North. I was going around like a sleepwalker most of the time, then, so it didn't hit me, at first. And then it did hit me.

Eva and I were out in the backyard. We'd fixed up an old swing seat there and it was dusky. Serena was humming in the kitchen. "Ole buzzard he fly away now—buzzard he fly away." I can't sing, but I can remember the way she sang it. It's funny how things stick in your head.

Eva had her head on my shoulder and my arms were around her. But we were as far away as Brooklyn and New York with the bridges down. Somebody was making love, but it wasn't us.

"When's he coming?" I said, finally.

"He's drivin' up in his car," she said. "He started yesterday."

Robert Nathan

"Young Lochinvar complete with windshield," I said. "He ought to be careful of those roads. Has he got a good car?"

"Yes," she said. "He's got a right pretty car."

"Oh, Eva, Eva," I said. "Doesn't it break your heart?"

"Why, honey," she said. "Come here to me."

We held each other a long time. She was very gentle. I'll remember that.

I stayed up most of that night, finishing revision on the novel. And, before I went to sleep, Furfew came to the house on the river plantation and walked in. I was standing in the hall and I couldn't lift a hand to him. So then I knew how it was going to be.

He came in the flesh, next afternoon. Yes, it was a good car. But he didn't look like Benedict Arnold. He was tall and black-haired and soft-voiced and he had on the sort of clothes they wear. He wasn't so old, either, not much older than I was. But the minute I saw him beside Eva, I knew it was all up. You only had to look at them. They were the same kind.

Oh, sure, he was a good business man. I got that in a minute. But, underneath all the externals, they were the same kind. It hadn't anything to do with the faithfulness or meanness. They were just the same breed of cats. If you're a dog and you fall in love with a cat, that's just your hard luck.

He'd brought up some corn with him and he and I sat up late, drinking it. We were awfully polite and noble in our conversation but we got things settled just the same. The funny thing is, I liked him. He was Young Lochinvar, he was little Mr. Fix-it, he was death and destruction to me, but I couldn't help liking him. He could have come to the island when Eva and I were married. He'd have been a great help. I'd have built him a house by the cove. And that's queer.

Next day, they all went out in the car for a picnic, and I stayed home, reading my novel. I read it all through—and there was nothing there. I'd tried to make the heroine like Eva, but even that hadn't worked. Sometimes you get a novelty like that—it looks like a world-

beater till you get it into production. And then, you know you've just got to cut your losses. Well, this was the same proposition.

So I took it down to the furnace and watched it burn. It takes quite a while to burn four hundred sheets of paper in a cold furnace. You'd be surprised.

On my way back, I passed through the kitchen where Serena was. We looked at each other and she put her hand on the bread-knife.

"I'll like to see you burning in hell, Serena," I said. I'd always wanted to say that. Then I went upstairs, feeling her eyes on my back like the point of the bread-knife.

When I lay down on the bed, I knew that something was finished. It wasn't only Eva or the novel. I guess it was what you call youth. Well, we've all got to lose it, but generally it just fades out.

I lay there a long time, not sleeping, not thinking. And I heard them coming back and, after a while, the door opened gently and I knew it was Eva. But my eyes were shut and I didn't make a move. So, after another while, she went away.

There isn't much else to tell. Furfew settled everything up—don't tell me Southerners can't move fast when they want to—and the packers came and four days later they all started back for Chantry in the car. I guess he wasn't taking any chances, but he needn't have worried. I knew it was up. Even hearing Cousin Belle had "come around" didn't excite me. I was past that.

Eva kissed me good-by—they all did, for that matter—the mother and the three sisters. They were sort of gay and excited, thinking of the motor-trip and getting back. To look at them, you wouldn't have said they'd ever seen a bill-collector. Well, that was the way they were.

"Don't write," I said to Eva. "Don't write, Mrs. Lochinvar."

She puckered her brows as she did when she was really puzzled.

"Why, honey, of co'se I'll write," she said. "Why wouldn't I write you, honey?"

I am sure she did, too. I can see the shape of the letters. But I never got them because I never left an address.

The person who was utterly dumbfounded was Mr. Budd. We

Robert Nathan

camped in the house for a week, getting our own meals and sleeping under overcoats—the lease wasn't up till the first and Furfew had made an arrangement with the owner. And Mr. Budd couldn't get over it.

"I always knew they were crazy," he said. "But I'll never get such cooking again." I could see him looking into a future of boarding-houses. "You're young," he said. "You can eat anything. But when a man gets my age—"

He was wrong, though. I wasn't young. If I had been, I wouldn't have spent that week figuring out three novelties. Two of them were duds, but the third was Jiggety Jane. You've seen her—the little dancing doll that went all over the country when people were doing the Charleston. I made the face like Serena's at first, but it looked too lifelike, so we changed the face. The other people made most of the money, but I didn't care. I never liked the darn thing anyway. And it gave me a chance to start on my own.

They couldn't stop me after that. You're harder to stop, once you get rid of your youth. No, I don't think it was ironic or any of those things. You don't, outside of a book. There wasn't any connection between the two matters.

That fall I met Marian and we got married a year later. She's got a lot of sense, that girl, and it's worked out fine. Maybe we did have the children a little quick, but she'd always wanted children. When you've got children and a home, you've got something to keep you steady. And, if she gets a kick out of reading love stories, let her. So I don't have to.

In a book, I'd have run across Eva, or seen Furfew's name in a paper. But that's never happened and I suppose it never will. I imagine they're all still in Chantry, and Chantry's one of those places that never gets in the news. The only thing I can't imagine is any of them being dead.

I wouldn't mind seeing Furfew again, for that matter. As I say, I liked the man. The only thing I hold against him is his moving them back, that way, before the lease was up. It was all right and he had

his reasons. But they had two weeks left—two weeks till the first. And that would just have finished the year.

And when I get to sleep nowadays, Marian's there in the next bed, so that's all right, too. I've only tried to go back to the river plantation once, after a convention in Chicago when I was pretty well lit. And then, I couldn't do it. I was standing on the other side of the river and I could see the house across the water. Just the way it always was, but it didn't look lived in. At least nobody came to the window—nobody came out.

ALLAN NEVINS:

"I wish I had written

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

by JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS"

Mr. Nevins, twice winner of the Pulitzer award for biography (GROVER CLEVELAND and HAMILTON FISH) is one of the most eminent historians in America. In addition to being Professor of American History at Columbia University, Mr. Nevins has made many important contributions to our literature. "This poignant tale by the Southerner who, reared in close association with Negro people, did most to preserve Negro folklore, is more than a little masterpiece of the storytelling art," says Mr. Nevins. "It contains a deeper insight into the Negro question than is to be found in all of Mrs. Stowe's long novel UNCLE TOM'S CABIN. The essence of that problem was not slavery, but the underlying issue of race-adjustment. Abolish slavery, give the Negro his freedom, and the painful question of bringing white and black into proper adjustment simply took on a new form. In the period of this story, the free Negro both North and South, in New York and Illinois as in Alabama and Mississippi, was all too generally neglected, despised, and exploited. Joel Chandler Harris's transcript from experience (for he doubtless heard of many counterparts of Joe) lights up a tremendous problem of ante-bellum days which is, in different form, a tremendous problem still."

THE name of Free Joe strikes humorously upon the ear of memory. It is impossible to say why, for he was the humblest, the simplest, and the most serious of all God's living creatures, sadly lacking in all those elements that suggest the humorous. It is certain, moreover, that in 1850 the sober-minded citizens of the little Georgian village of Hillsborough were not inclined to take a humorous view of Free Joe, and neither his name nor his presence provoked a smile. He was a black atom, drifting hither and thither without an

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

owner, blown about by all the winds of circumstance, and given over to shiftlessness.

The problems of one generation are the paradoxes of a succeeding one, particularly if war, or some such incident, intervenes to clarify the atmosphere and strengthen the understanding. Thus, in 1850, Free Joe represented not only a problem of large concern, but, in the watchful eyes of Hillsborough, he was the embodiment of that vague and mysterious danger that seemed to be forever lurking on the outskirts of slavery, ready to sound a shrill and ghostly signal in the impenetrable swamps, and steal forth under the midnight stars to murder, rapine, and pillage—a danger always threatening, and yet never assuming shape; intangible, and yet real; impossible, and yet not improbable. Across the serene and smiling front of safety, the pale outlines of the awful shadow of insurrection sometimes fell. With this invisible panorama as a background, it was natural that the figure of Free Joe, simple and humble as it was, should assume undue proportions. Go where he would, do what he might, he could not escape the finger of observation and the kindling eye of suspicion. His lightest words were noted, his slightest actions marked.

Under all the circumstances it was natural that his peculiar condition should reflect itself in his habits and manners. The slaves laughed loudly day by day, but Free Joe rarely laughed. The slaves sang at their work and danced at their frolics, but no one ever heard Free Joe sing or saw him dance. There was something painfully plaintive and appealing in his attitude, something touching in his anxiety to please. He was of the friendliest nature, and seemed to be delighted when he could amuse the little children who had made a playground of the public square. At times he would please them by making his little dog Dan perform all sorts of curious tricks, or he would tell them quaint stories of the beasts of the field and birds of the air; and frequently he was coaxed into relating the story of his own freedom. That story was brief, but tragical.

In the year of our Lord 1840, when a negro-speculator of a sportive turn of mind reached the little village of Hillsborough on his way to the Mississippi region, with a caravan of likely negroes of

Allan Nevins

both sexes, he found much to interest him. In that day and at that time there were a number of young men in the village who had not bound themselves over to repentance for the various misdeeds of the flesh. To these young men the negro-speculator (Major Frampton was his name) proceeded to address himself. He was a Virginian, he declared; and, to prove the statement, he referred all the festively inclined young men of Hillsborough to a barrel of peach-brandy in one of his covered wagons. In the minds of these young men there was less doubt in regard to the age and quality of the brandy than there was in regard to the negro-trader's birthplace. Major Frampton might or might not have been born in the Old Dominion—that was a matter for consideration and inquiry,—but there could be no question as to the mellow pungency of the peach-brandy.

In his own estimation, Major Frampton was one of the most accomplished of men. He had summered at the Virginia Springs; he had been to Philadelphia, to Washington, to Richmond, to Lynchburg, and to Charleston, and had accumulated a great deal of experience which he found useful. Hillsborough was hid in the woods of Middle Georgia, and its general aspect of innocence impressed him. He looked on the young men who had shown their readiness to test his peach-brandy, as overgrown country boys who needed to be introduced to some of the arts and sciences he had at his command. Thereupon the major pitched his tents, figuratively speaking, and became, for the time being, a part and parcel of the innocence that characterized Hillsborough. A wiser man would doubtless have made the same mistake.

The little village possessed advantages that seemed to be providentially arranged to fit the various enterprises that Major Frampton had in view. There was the auction-block in front of the stuccoed court-house, if he desired to dispose of a few of his negroes; there was a quarter-track, laid out to his hand and in excellent order, if he chose to enjoy the pleasures of horse-racing; there were secluded pine thickets within easy reach, if he desired to indulge in the exciting pastime of cock-fighting; and various lonely and unoccupied

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

rooms in the second story of the tavern, if he cared to challenge the chances of dice or cards.

Major Frampton tried them all with varying luck, until he began his famous game of poker with Judge Alfred Wellington, a stately gentleman with a flowing white beard and mild blue eyes that gave him the appearance of a benevolent patriarch. The history of the game in which Major Frampton and Judge Alfred Wellington took part is something more than a tradition in Hillsborough, for there are still living three or four men who sat around the table and watched its progress. It is said that at various stages of the game Major Frampton would destroy the cards with which they were playing, and send for a new pack, but the result was always the same. The mild blue eyes of Judge Wellington, with few exceptions, continued to overlook "hands" that were invincible—a habit they had acquired during a long and arduous course of training from Saratoga to New Orleans. Major Frampton lost his money, his horses, his wagons, and all his negroes but one, his body-servant. When his misfortune had reached this limit, the major adjourned the game. The sun was shining brightly, and all nature was cheerful. It is said that the major also seemed to be cheerful. However this may be, he visited the courthouse, and executed the papers that gave his body-servant his freedom. This being done, Major Frampton sauntered into a convenient pine thicket, and blew out his brains.

The negro thus freed came to be known as Free Joe. Compelled, under the law, to choose a guardian, he chose Judge Wellington, chiefly because his wife Lucinda was among the negroes won from Major Frampton. For several years Free Joe had what may be called a jovial time. His wife Lucinda was well provided for, and he found it a comparatively easy matter to provide for himself; so that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, it is not matter for astonishment that he became somewhat shiftless.

When Judge Wellington died, Free Joe's troubles began. The judge's negroes, including Lucinda, went to his half-brother, a man named Calderwood, who was a hard master and a rough customer generally—a man of many eccentricities of mind and character. His

Allan Nevins

neighbors had a habit of alluding to him as "Old Spite"; and the name seemed to fit him so completely, that he was known far and near as "Spite" Calderwood. He probably enjoyed the distinction the name gave him, at any rate, he never resented it, and it was not often that he missed an opportunity to show that he deserved it. Calderwood's place was two or three miles from the village of Hillsborough, and Free Joe visited his wife twice a week, Wednesday and Saturday nights.

One Sunday he was sitting in front of Lucinda's cabin, when Calderwood happened to pass that way.

"Howdy, marster," said Free Joe, taking off his hat.

"Who are you?" exclaimed Calderwood abruptly, halting and staring at the negro.

"I'm name' Joe, marster. I'm Lucindy's ole man."

"Who do you belong to?"

"Marse John Evans is my gyardeen, marster."

"Big name—gyardeen. Show your pass."

Free Joe produced that document, and Calderwood read it aloud slowly, as if he found it difficult to get at the meaning:—

"To whom it may concern: This is to certify that the boy Joe Frampton has my permission to visit his wife Lucinda."

This was dated at Hillsborough, and signed "*John W. Evans.*"

Calderwood read it twice, and then looked at Free Joe, elevating his eyebrows, and showing his discolored teeth.

"Some mighty big words in that there. Evans owns this place. I reckon. When's he comin' down to take hold?"

Free Joe fumbled with his hat. He was badly frightened.

"Lucindy say she speck you wouldn't min' my comin', long ez I behave, marster."

Calderwood tore the pass in pieces and flung it away.

"Don't want no free niggers 'round here," he exclaimed. "There's the big road. It'll carry you to town. Don't let me catch you here no more. Now, mind what I tell you."

Free Joe presented a shabby spectacle as he moved off with his little dog Dan slinking at his heels. It should be said in behalf of

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

Dan, however, that his bristles were up, and that he looked back and growled. It may be that the dog had the advantage of insignificance, but it is difficult to conceive how a dog bold enough to raise his bristles under Calderwood's very eyes could be as insignificant as Free Joe. But both the negro and his little dog seemed to give a new and more dismal aspect to forlornness as they turned into the road and went toward Hillsborough.

After this incident Free Joe appeared to have clearer ideas concerning his peculiar condition. He realized the fact that though he was free he was more helpless than any slave. Having no owner, every man was his master. He knew that he was the object of suspicion, and therefore all his slender resources (ah! how pitifully slender they were!) were devoted to winning, not kindness and appreciation, but toleration; all his efforts were in the direction of mitigating the circumstances that tended to make his condition so much worse than that of the negroes around him—negroes who had friends because they had masters.

So far as his own race was concerned, Free Joe was an exile. If the slaves secretly envied him his freedom (which is to be doubted, considering his miserable condition), they openly despised him, and lost no opportunity to treat him with contumely. Perhaps this was in some measure the result of the attitude which Free Joe chose to maintain toward them. No doubt his instinct taught him that to hold himself aloof from the slaves would be to invite from the whites the toleration which he coveted, and without which even his miserable condition would be rendered more miserable still.

His greatest trouble was the fact that he was not allowed to visit his wife; but he soon found a way out of this difficulty. After he had been ordered away from the Calderwood place, he was in the habit of wandering as far in that direction as prudence would permit. Near the Calderwood place, but not on Calderwood's land, lived an old man named Micajah Staley and his sister Becky Staley. These people were old and very poor. Old Micajah had a palsied arm and hand; but, in spite of this, he managed to earn a precarious living with his turning-lathe.

Allan Nevins

When he was a slave Free Joe would have scorned these representatives of a class known as poor white trash, but now he found them sympathetic and helpful in various ways. From the back door of their cabin he could hear the Calderwood negroes singing at night, and he sometimes fancied he could distinguish Lucinda's shrill treble rising above the other voices. A large poplar grew in the woods some distance from the Staley cabin, and at the foot of this tree Free Joe would sit for hours with his face turned toward Calderwood's. His little dog Dan would curl up in the leaves near by, and the two seemed to be as comfortable as possible.

One Saturday afternoon Free Joe, sitting at the foot of this friendly poplar, fell asleep. How long he slept, he could not tell; but when he awoke little Dan was licking his face, the moon was shining brightly, and Lucinda his wife stood before him laughing. The dog, seeing that Free Joe was asleep, had grown somewhat impatient, and he concluded to make an excursion to the Calderwood place on his own account. Lucinda was inclined to give the incident a twist in the direction of superstition.

"I 'uz settin' down front er de fireplace," she said, "cookin' me some meat, w'en all of a sudden I year sumpin at de do'-scratch, scratch. I tuck'n tu'n de meat over, en make out I aint year it. Bimeby it come dar 'gin—scratch, scratch. I up en open de do', I did, en, bless de Lord! dar wuz little Dan, en it look like ter me dat his ribs done grow tergeer. I gin 'im some bread, en den, w'en he start out, I tuck'n foller 'im kaze, I say ter myse'f, maybe my nigger man mought be some'rs 'roun'. Dat ar little dog got sense, mon."

Free Joe laughed and dropped his hand lightly on Dan's head. For a long time after that he had no difficulty in seeing his wife. He had only to sit by the poplar-tree until little Dan could run and fetch her. But after a while the other negroes discovered that Lucinda was meeting Free Joe in the woods, and information of the fact soon reached Calderwood's ears. Calderwood was what is called a man of action. He said nothing; but one day he put Lucinda in his buggy, and carried her to Macon, sixty miles away. He carried her to Macon,

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

and came back without her; and nobody in or around Hillsborough, or in that section, ever saw her again.

For many a night after that Free Joe sat in the woods and waited. Little Dan would run merrily off and be gone a long time, but he always came back without Lucinda. This happened over and over again. The "willis-whistlers" would call and call, like phantom huntsmen wandering on a far-off shore; the screech-owl would shake and shiver in the depths of the woods; the night-hawks, sweeping by on noiseless wings, would snap their beaks as though they enjoyed the huge joke of which Free Joe and little Dan were the victims; and the whip-poor-wills would cry to each other through the gloom. Each night seemed to be lonelier than the preceding, but Free Joe's patience was proof against loneliness. There came a time, however, when little Dan refused to go after Lucinda. When Free Joe motioned him in the direction of the Calderwood place, he would simply move about uneasily and whine; then he would curl up in the leaves and make himself comfortable.

One night, instead of going to the poplar-tree to wait for Lucinda, Free Joe went to the Staley cabin, and, in order to make his welcome good, as he expressed it, he carried with him an armful of fat-pine splinters. Miss Becky Staley had a great reputation in those parts as a fortune-teller, and the schoolgirls, as well as older people, often tested her powers in this direction, some in jest and some in earnest. Free Joe placed his humble offering of light-wood in the chimney-corner, and then seated himself on the steps, dropping his hat on the ground outside.

"Miss Becky," he said presently, "whar in de name er gracious you reckon Lucindy is?"

"Well, the Lord he'p the nigger!" exclaimed Miss Becky, in a tone that seemed to reproduce, by some curious agreement of sight with sound, her general aspect of peakedness. "Well, the Lord he'p the nigger! haint you been a-seein' her all this blessed time? She's over at old Spite Calderwood's, if she's anywheres, I reckon."

"No'm, dat I aint, Miss Becky. I aint seen Lucindy in now gwine on mighty nigh a mont'."

Allan Nevins

"Well, it haint a-gwine to hurt you," said Miss Becky, somewhat sharply. "In my day an' time it wuz allers took to be a bad sign when niggers got to honeyin' 'round an' gwine on."

"Yessum," said Free Joe, cheerfully assenting to the proposition—"yessum, dat's so, but me an' my ole 'oman, we 'uz raise tergeer, en dey aint bin many days w'en we 'uz 'way fum one 'n'er like we is now."

"Maybe she's up an' took up wi' some un else," said Micajah Staley from the corner. "You know what the sayin' is, 'New master, new nigger.'"

"Dat's so, dat's de sayin', but tain't wid my ole 'oman like 'tis wid yuther niggers. Me en her wuz des natally raise up tergeer. Dey's lots likelier niggers dan w'at I is," said Free Joe, viewing his shabbiness with a critical eye, "but I knows Lucindy mos' good ez I does little Dan dar—dat I does."

There was no reply to this, and Free Joe continued—

"Miss Becky, I wish you please, ma'am, take en run yo' kyards en see sump'n n'er 'bout Lucindy; kaze ef she sick, I'm gwine dar. Dey ken take en take me up en gimme a stroppin', but I'm gwine dar."

Miss Becky got her cards, but first she picked up a cup, in the bottom of which were some coffee-grounds. These she swirled slowly round and round, ending finally by turning the cup upside down on the hearth and allowing it to remain in that position.

"I'll turn the cup first," said Miss Becky, "and then I'll run the cards and see what they say."

As she shuffled the cards the fire on the hearth burned low, and in its fitful light the gray-haired, thin-featured woman seemed to deserve the weird reputation which rumor and gossip had given her. She shuffled the cards for some moments, gazing intently in the dying fire; then, throwing a piece of pine on the coals, she made three divisions of the pack, disposing them about in her lap. Then she took the first pile, ran the cards slowly through her fingers, and studied them carefully. To the first she added the second pile. The study of these was evidently not satisfactory. She said nothing, but frowned heavily; and the frown deepened as she added the rest of the cards until the

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

entire fifty-two had passed in review before her. Though she frowned, she seemed to be deeply interested. Without changing the relative position of the cards, she ran them all over again. Then she threw a larger piece of pine on the fire, shuffled the cards afresh, divided them into three piles, and subjected them to the same careful and critical examination.

"I can't tell the day when I've seed the cards run this a-way," she said after a while. "What is an' what aint, I'll never tell you; but I know what the cards sez."

"W'at does dey say, Miss Becky?" the negro inquired, in a tone the solemnity of which was heightened by its eagerness.

"They er runnin' quare. These here that I'm a-lookin' at," said Miss Becky, "they stan' for the past. Them there, they er the present; and the t'others, they er the future. Here's a bundle"—tapping the ace of clubs with her thumb—"an' here's a journey as plain as the nose on a man's face. Here's Lucinda"—

"Whar she, Miss Becky?"

"Here she is—the queen of spades."

Free Joe grinned. The idea seemed to please him immensely.

"Well, well, well!" he exclaimed. "Ef dat don't beat my time! De queen er spades! W'en Lucindy year dat hit'll tickle 'er, sho'!"

Miss Becky continued to run the cards back and forth through her fingers.

"Here's a bundle an' a journey, and here's Lucinda. An' here's old Spite Calderwood."

She held the cards toward the negro and touched the king of clubs.

"De Lord he'p my soul!" exclaimed Free Joe with a chuckle. "De faver's dar. Yesser, dat's him! W'at de matter 'long wid all un um, Miss Becky?"

The old woman added the second pile of cards to the first, and then the third, still running them through her fingers slowly and critically. By this time the piece of pine in the fireplace had wrapped itself in a mantle of flame, illuminating the cabin and throwing into strange relief the figure of Miss Becky as she sat studying the cards. She frowned ominously at the cards and mumbled a few words to

Allan Nevins

herself. Then she dropped her hands in her lap and gazed once more into the fire. Her shadow danced and capered on the wall and floor behind her, as if, looking over her shoulder into the future, it could behold a rare spectacle. After a while she picked up the cup that had been turned on the hearth. The coffee-grounds, shaken around, presented what seemed to be a most intricate map.

"Here's the journey," said Miss Becky, presently; "here's the big road, here's rivers to cross, here's the bundle to tote." She paused and sighed. "They haint no names writ here, an' what it all means I'll never tell you. Cajy, I wish you'd be so good as to han' me my pipe."

"I haint no hand wi' the kyards," said Cajy, as he handed the pipe, "but I reckon I can patch out your misinformation, Becky, bekaze the other day, whiles I was a-finishin' up Mizzers Perdue's rollin'-pin, I hearn a rattlin' in the road. I looked out, an' Spite Calderwood was a-drivin' by in his buggy, an' thar sot Lucinda by him. It'd in-about dрапt out er my min'."

Free Joe sat on the door-sill and fumbled at his hat, flinging it from one hand to the other.

"You aint see um gwine back, is you, Mars Cajy?" he asked after a while.

"Ef they went back by this road," said Mr. Staley, with the air of one who is accustomed to weigh well his words, "it must 'a' bin endurin' of the time whiles I was asleep, bekaze I haint bin no furder from my shop than to yon bed."

"Well, sir!" exclaimed Free Joe in an awed tone, which Mr. Staley seemed to regard as a tribute to his extraordinary powers of statement.

"Ef it's my beliefs you want," continued the old man, "I'll pitch 'em at you fair and free. My beliefs is that Spite Calderwood is gone an' took Lucindy outen the county. Bless your heart and soul! when Spite Calderwood meets the Old Boy in the road they'll be a turrible scuffle. You mark what I tell you."

Free Joe, still fumbling with his hat, rose and leaned against the door-facing. He seemed to be embarrassed. Presently he said—

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

"I speck I better be gittin' 'long. Nex' time I see Lucindy, I'm gwine tell 'er w'at Miss Becky say 'bout de queen er spades—dat I is. Ef dat don't tickle 'er, dey aint no nigger 'oman never bin tickle'."

He paused a moment, as though waiting for some remark or comment, some confirmation of misfortune, or, at the very least, some indorsement of his suggestion that Lucinda would be greatly pleased to know that she had figured as the queen of spades; but neither Miss Becky nor her brother said anything.

"One minnit ridin' in the buggy 'longside er Mars Spite, en de nex' highfalutin' 'roun' playin' de queen er spades. Mon, deze yer nigger gals gittin' up in de pictur's; dey sholy is."

With a brief "Good-night, Miss Becky, Mars Cajy," Free Joe went out into the darkness, followed by little Dan. He made his way to the poplar, where Lucinda had been in the habit of meeting him, and sat down. He sat there for a long time; he sat there until little Dan, growing restless, trotted off in the direction of the Calderwood place. Dozing against the poplar, in the gray dawn of the morning, Free Joe heard Spite Calderwood's fox-hounds in full cry a mile away.

"Shoo!" he exclaimed, scratching his head, and laughing to himself, "dem ar dogs is des a-warmin' dat old fox up."

But it was Dan the hounds were after, and the little dog came back no more. Free Joe waited and waited, until he grew tired of waiting. He went back the next night and waited, and for many nights thereafter. His waiting was in vain, and yet he never regarded it as in vain. Careless and shabby as he was, Free Joe was thoughtful enough to have his theory. He was convinced that little Dan had found Lucinda, and that some night when the moon was shining brightly through the trees, the dog would rouse him from his dreams as he sat sleeping at the foot of the poplar-tree, and he would open his eyes and behold Lucinda standing over him, laughing merrily as of old; and then he thought what fun they would have about the queen of spades.

How many long nights Free Joe waited at the foot of the poplar-

Allan Nevins

tree for Lucinda and little Dan, no one can ever know. He kept no account of them, and they were not recorded by Micajah Staley nor by Miss Becky. The season ran into summer and then into fall. One night he went to the Staley cabin, cut the two old people an armful of wood, and seated himself on the door-steps, where he rested. He was always thankful—and proud, as it seemed—when Miss Becky gave him a cup of coffee, which she was sometimes thoughtful enough to do. He was especially thankful on this particular night.

“You er still layin’ off for to strike up wi’ Lucindy out there in the woods, I reckon,” said Micajah Staley, smiling grimly. The situation was not without its humorous aspects.

“Oh, dey er comin’, Mars Cajy, dey er comin’, sho,” Free Joe replied. “I boun’ you dey’ll come; en w’en dey does come, I’ll des take en fetch um yer, whar you kin see um wid you own eyes, you en Miss Becky.”

“No,” said Mr. Staley, with a quick and emphatic gesture of disapproval. “Don’t! don’t fetch ‘em anywheres. Stay right wi’ ‘em as long as may be.”

Free Joe chuckled, and slipped away into the night, while the two old people sat gazing in the fire. Finally Micajah spoke.

“Look at that nigger; look at ‘im. He’s pine-blank as happy now as a killdee by a mill-race. You can’t ’faze ‘em. I’d in-about give up my t’other hand ef I could stan’ flat-footed, an’ grin at trouble like that there nigger.”

“Niggers is niggers,” said Miss Becky, smiling grimly, “an’ you can’t rub it out; yit I lay I’ve seed a heap of white people lots meaner’n Free Joe. He grins—an’ that’s nigger—but I’ve ketched his under jaw a-trimblin’ when Lucindy’s name uz brung up. An’ I tell you,” she went on, bridling up a little, and speaking with almost fierce emphasis, “the Old Boy’s done sharpened his claws for Spite Calderwood. You’ll see it.”

“Me, Rebecca?” said Mr. Staley, hugging his palsied arm; “me? I hope not.”

“Well, you’ll know it then,” said Miss Becky, laughing heartily at her brother’s look of alarm.

Free Joe and the Rest of the World

The next morning Micajah Staley had occasion to go into the woods after a piece of timber. He saw Free Joe sitting at the foot of the poplar, and the sight vexed him somewhat.

"Git up from there," he cried, "an' go an' arn your livin'. A mighty purty pass it's come to, when great big buck niggers can lie a-snорин' in the woods all day, when t'other folks is got to be up an' a-gwine. Git up from there!"

Receiving no response, Mr. Staley went to Free Joe, and shook him by the shoulder; but the negro made no response. He was dead. His hat was off, his head was bent, and a smile was on his face. It was as if he had bowed and smiled when death stood before him, humble to the last. His clothes were ragged; his hands were rough and callous; his shoes were literally tied together with strings; he was shabby in the extreme. A passer-by, glancing at him, could have no idea that such a humble creature had been summoned as a witness before the Lord God of Hosts.

JAMES THURBER:

"I wish I had written

Farewell, My Lovely!

by LEE STROUT WHITE"

(Richard Lee Strout and E. B. White)

Mr. Thurber, humorist, cartoonist and playwright, is the creator of people whose antics in line and word won't leave your mind. A memorable part of these gems have been collected into THE THURBER CARNIVAL. Mr. Thurber, author of THE MALE ANIMAL (with Elliott Nugent) and the recent adult-juvenile THE WHITE DEER, has written two of the selections chosen for this volume. His admiration of "Farewell, My Lovely!" takes the following form: "It has been just a quarter of a century since I, an old Reo and Overland man, got into the driver's seat of a Model T Ford, inspired by what proved to be a false confidence in my ability to run the thing. I crashed into the rear end of a parked Buick, whose driver had been sitting behind the wheel reading a newspaper. He leaped out of his car, but instead of berating or threatening me, he grinned sheepishly, said that he was sorry and that he would be glad to pay for any damage to the Model T. Since the Ford had come out of the unequal struggle without a scratch while the other man's car was considerably banged up, I could only stare at the Buick owner and mumble that it was quite all right. This was the kind of inexplicable thing that used to happen in the mystical and topsy-turvy era of the Model T.

"Once I sat beside a lady who was driving a Ford coupe, Model T, of course, when it came to a sudden stop on a country road beside a field of cornflowers. The driver of another Ford stopped alongside the car I was in and asked if he could help. The lady looked at him hopefully. 'What would make a Ford just suddenly stop?' she asked. The man gazed at her briefly and said, simply, 'Great God, lady!' After an hour's work, the man got the thing to run again, we gave him the Ford grip and jangled off down the road, making a racket that I fondly remember as sounding like a village belling.

"In the long and exciting history of transportation in America, from

Farewell, My Lovely!

the covered wagon and the steamboat to the jet-propelled plane, there has never been a contraption anywhere near so wonderful and mysterious as the Model T. The period of our national life during which the early Ford flourished and multiplied was marked by a hundred other phenomena, each of which has had its devoted historian or memorialist. It was not until ten years ago that the Model T found its perfect advocate and chronicler. ‘Farewell, My Lovely!’, compact but complete, deserves a high and special place in any future history of our century which proposes to catch the color and the wonder of the time, along with the facts and figures.

“Even the most casual student of modern writing will detect in ‘Farewell, My Lovely!’ the hand of my favorite essayist, E. B. White. The unfamiliar signature to the piece is a combination of his name and that of Richard Lee Strout. Back in 1936, Mr. Strout submitted to *The New Yorker* a purely factual article about the Model T. Mr. Strout’s careful and loving data on the Great Machine turned the wheels of Mr. White’s fancy, and the original author cheerfully agreed to let him rewrite the piece in his own way. The result was my favorite essay, ‘Farewell, My Lovely!’ It was published later in a small volume all by itself. For some inscrutable reason, the little book escaped the attention of the large audience it deserved. It is, therefore, a special pleasure and privilege to bring ‘Farewell, My Lovely!’ into this congenial company of favorites, where it belongs.”

I SEE by the new Sears Roebuck catalogue that it is still possible to buy an axle for a 1909 Model T Ford, but I am not deceived. The great days have faded, the end is in sight. Only one page in the current catalogue is devoted to parts and accessories for the Model T; yet everyone remembers springtimes when the Ford gadget section was larger than men’s clothing, almost as large as household furnishings. The last Model T was built in 1927, and the car is fading from what scholars call the American scene—which is an understatement, because to a few million people who grew up with it, the old Ford practically *was* the American scene.

It was the miracle God had wrought. And it was patently the sort of thing that could only happen once. Mechanically uncanny, it was

Permission of the author and *The New Yorker*. Copyright, 1936, by Lee Strout White, The F-R. Publishing Corporation.

James Thurber

like nothing that had ever come to the world before. Flourishing industries rose and fell with it. As a vehicle, it was hard-working, commonplace, heroic; and it often seemed to transmit those qualities to the persons who rode in it. My own generation identifies it with Youth, with its gaudy, irretrievable excitements; before it fades into the mist, I would like to pay it the tribute of a sigh that is not a sob, and set down random entries in a shape somewhat less cumbersome than a Sears Roebuck catalogue.

The Model *T* was distinguished from all other makes of cars by the fact that its transmission was of a type known as planetary—which was half metaphysics, half sheer friction. Engineers accepted the word “planetary” in its epicyclic sense, but I was always conscious that it also meant “wandering,” “erratic.” Because of the peculiar nature of this planetary element, there was always, in Model *T*, a certain dull rapport between engine and wheels, and even when the car was in a state known as neutral, it trembled with a deep imperative and tended to inch forward. There was never a moment when the bands were not faintly egging the machine on. In this respect it was like a horse, rolling the bit on its tongue, and country people brought to it the same technique they used with draft animals.

Its most remarkable quality was its rate of acceleration. In its palmy days the Model *T* could take off faster than anything on the road. The reason was simple. To get under way, you simply hooked the third finger of the right hand around a lever on the steering column, pulled down hard, and shoved your left foot forcibly against the low-speed pedal. These were simple, positive motions; the car responded by lunging forward with a roar. After a few seconds of this turmoil, you took your toe off the pedal, eased up a mite on the throttle, and the car, possessed of only two forward speeds, catapulted directly into high with a series of ugly jerks and was off on its glorious errand. The abruptness of this departure was never equalled in other cars of the period. The human leg was (and still is) incapable of letting in a clutch with anything like the forthright abandon that used to send Model *T* on its way. Letting in a clutch is a negative, hesitant motion, depending on delicate nervous con-

Farewell, My Lovely!

trol; pushing down the Ford pedal was a simple, country motion—an expansive act, which came as natural as kicking an old door to make it budge.

The driver of the old Model *T* was a man enthroned. The car, with top up, stood seven feet high. The driver sat on top of the gas tank, brooding it with his own body. When he wanted gasoline, he alighted along with everything else in the front seat; the seat was pulled off, the metal cap unscrewed, and a wooden stick thrust down to sound the liquid in the well. There were always a couple of these sounding sticks kicking around in the ratty sub-cushion regions of a flivver. Refueling was more of a social function then, because the driver had to unbend, whether he wanted to or not. Directly in front of the driver was the windshield—high, uncompromisingly erect. Nobody talked about air resistance, and the four cylinders pushed the car through the atmosphere with a simple disregard of physical law.

There was this about a Model *T*: the purchaser never regarded his purchase a complete, finished product. When you bought a Ford, you figured you had a start—a vibrant, spirited framework to which could be screwed an almost limitless assortment of decorative and functional hardware. Driving away from the agency, hugging the new wheel between your knees, you were already full of creative worry. A Ford was born naked as a baby, and a flourishing industry grew up out of correcting its rare deficiencies and combatting its fascinating diseases. Those were the great days of lily-painting. I have been looking at some old Sears Roebuck catalogues, and they bring everything back so clear.

First you bought a Ruby Safety Reflector for the rear, so that your posterior would glow in another car's brilliance. Then you invested thirty-nine cents in some radiator Moto Wings, a popular ornament which gave the Pegasus touch to the machine and did something god-like to the owner. For nine cents you bought a fan-belt guide to keep the belt from slipping off the pulley.

You bought a radiator compound to stop leaks. This was as much

James Thurber

a part of everybody's equipment as aspirin tablets are of a medicine cabinet. You bought a special oil to prevent chattering, a clamp-on dash light, a patching outfit, a tool box which you bolted to the running board, a sun visor, a steering-column brace to keep the column rigid, and a set of emergency containers for gas, oil, and water—three thin, disc-like cans which reposed in a case on the running board during long, important journeys—red for gas, gray for water, green for oil. It was only a beginning. After the car was about a year old, steps were taken to check the alarming disintegration. (Model *T* was full of tumors, but they were benign.) A set of anti-rattlers (98c) was a popular panacea. You hooked them on to the gas and spark rods, to the brake pull rod, and to the steering-rod connections. Hood silencers, of black rubber, were applied to the fluttering hood. Shock-absorbers and snubbers gave "complete relaxation." Some people bought rubber pedal pads, to fit over the standard metal pedals. (I didn't like these, I remember.) Persons of a suspicious or pugnacious turn of mind bought a rear-view mirror; but most Model *T* owners weren't worried by what was coming from behind because they would soon enough see it out in front. They rode in a state of cheerful catalepsy. Quite a large mutinous clique among Ford owners went over to a foot accelerator (you could buy one and screw it to the floor board), but there was a certain madness in these people, because the Model *T*, just as she stood, had a choice of three foot pedals to push, and there were plenty of moments when both feet were occupied in the routine performance of duty and when the only way to speed up the engine was with the hand throttle.

Gadget bred gadget. Owners not only bought ready-made gadgets, they invented gadgets to meet special needs. I myself drove my car directly from the agency to the blacksmith's, and had the smith affix two enormous iron brackets to the port running board to support an army trunk.

People who owned closed models builded along different lines: they bought ball grip handles for opening doors, window anti-rattlers, and deluxe flower vases of the cut-glass anti-splash type. People with delicate sensibilities garnished their cars with a device

Farewell, My Lovely!

called the Donna Lee Automobile Disseminator—a porous vase guaranteed, according to Sears, to fill the car with a “faint clean odor of lavender.” The gap between open cars and closed cars was not as great then as it is now: for \$11.95, Sears Roebuck converted your touring car into a sedan and you went forth renewed. One agreeable quality of the old Fords was that they had no bumpers, and their fenders softened and wilted with the years and permitted the driver to squeeze in and out of tight places.

Tires were 30 x 3½, cost about twelve dollars, and punctured readily. Everybody carried a Jiffy patching set, with a nutmeg grater to roughen the tube before the goo was spread on. Everybody was capable of putting on a patch, expected to have to, and did have to.

During my association with Model T's, self-starters were not a prevalent accessory. They were expensive and under suspicion. Your car came equipped with a serviceable crank, and the first thing you learned was how to Get Results. It was a special trick, and until you learned it (usually from another Ford owner, but sometimes by a period of appalling experimentation) you might as well have been winding up an awning. The trick was to leave the ignition switch off, proceed to the animal's head, pull the choke (which was a little wire protruding through the radiator), and give the crank two or three nonchalant upward lifts. Then, whistling as though thinking about something else, you would saunter back to the driver's cabin, turn the ignition on, return to the crank, and this time, catching it on the down stroke, give it a quick spin with plenty of That. If this procedure was followed, the engine almost always responded—first with a few scattered explosions, then with a tumultuous gunfire, which you checked by racing around to the driver's seat and retarding the throttle. Often, if the emergency brake hadn't been pulled all the way back, the car advanced on you the instant the first explosion occurred and you would hold it back by leaning your weight against it. I can still feel my old Ford nuzzling me at the curb, as though looking for an apple in my pocket.

In zero weather, ordinary cranking became an impossibility, except

James Thurber

for giants. The oil thickened, and it became necessary to jack up the rear wheels, which, for some planetary reason, eased the throw.

The lore and legend that governed the Ford were boundless. Owners had their own theories about everything; they discussed mutual problems in that wise, infinitely resourceful way old women discuss rheumatism. Exact knowledge was pretty scarce, and often proved less effective than superstition. Dropping a camphor ball into the gas tank was a popular expedient; it seemed to have a tonic effect on both man and machine. There wasn't much to base exact knowledge on. The Ford driver flew blind. He didn't know the temperature of his engine, the speed of his car, the amount of his fuel, or the pressure of his oil (the old Ford lubricated itself by what was amiably described as the "splash system"). A speedometer cost money and was an extra, like a windshield-wiper. The dashboard of the early models was bare save for an ignition key; later models, grown effete, boasted an ammeter which pulsated alarmingly with the throbbing of the car. Under the dash was a box of coils, with vibrators which you adjusted, or thought you adjusted. Whatever the driver learned of his motor, he learned not through instruments but through sudden developments. I remember that the timer was one of the vital organs about which there was ample doctrine. When everything else had been checked, you "had a look" at the timer. It was an extravagantly odd little device, simple in construction, mysterious in function. It contained a roller, held by a spring, and there were four contact points on the inside of the case against which, many people believed, the roller rolled. I have had a timer apart on a sick Ford many times, but I never really knew what I was up to—I was just showing off before God. There were almost as many schools of thought as there were timers. Some people, when things went wrong, just clenched their teeth and gave the timer a smart crack with a wrench. Other people opened it and blew on it. There was a school that held that the timer needed large amounts of oil; they fixed it by frequent baptism. And there was a school that was positive it was meant to run dry as a bone; these people were continually taking it

Farewell, My Lovely!

off and wiping it. I remember once spitting into a timer; not in anger, but in a spirit of research. You see, the Model *T* driver moved in the realm of metaphysics. He believed his car could be hexed.

One reason the Ford anatomy was never reduced to an exact science was that, having “fixed” it, the owner couldn’t honestly claim that the treatment had brought about the cure. There were too many authenticated cases of Fords fixing themselves—restored naturally to health after a short rest. Farmers soon discovered this, and it fitted nicely with their draft-horse philosophy: “Let ‘er cool off and she’ll snap into it again.”

A Ford owner had Number One Bearing constantly in mind. This bearing, being at the front end of the motor, was the one that always burned out, because the oil didn’t reach it when the car was climbing hills. (That’s what I was always told, anyway.) The oil used to recede and leave Number One dry as a clam flat; you had to watch that bearing like a hawk. It was like a weak heart—you could hear it start knocking, and that was when you stopped and let her cool off. Try as you would to keep the oil supply right, in the end Number One always went out. “Number One Bearing burned out on me and I had to have her replaced,” you would say, wisely; and your companions always had a lot to tell about how to protect and pamper Number One to keep her alive.

Sprinkled not too liberally among the millions of amateur witch doctors who drove Fords and applied their own abominable cures were the heaven-sent mechanics who could really make the car talk. These professionals turned up in undreamed-of spots. One time, on the banks of the Columbia River in Washington, I heard the rear end go out of my Model *T* when I was trying to whip it up a steep incline onto the deck of a ferry. Something snapped; the car slid backward into the mud. It seemed to me like the end of the trail. But the captain of the ferry, observing the withered remnant, spoke up.

“What’s got her?” he asked.

“I guess it’s the rear end,” I replied, listlessly. The captain leaned

James Thurber

over the rail and stared. Then I saw that there was a hunger in his eyes that set him off from other men.

"Tell you what," he said, carelessly, trying to cover up his eagerness, "let's pull the son of a bitch up onto the boat, and I'll help you fix her while we're going back and forth on the river."

We did just this. All that day I plied between the towns of Pasco and Kennewick, while the skipper (who had once worked in a Ford garage) directed the amazing work of resetting the bones of my car.

Springtime in the heyday of the Model *T* was a delirious season. Owning a car was still a major excitement, roads were still wonderful and bad. The Fords were obviously conceived in madness: any car which was capable of going from forward into reverse without any perceptible mechanical hiatus was bound to be a mighty challenging thing to the human imagination. Boys used to veer them off the highway into a level pasture and run wild with them, as though they were cutting up with a girl.

Most everybody used the reverse pedal quite as much as the regular foot brake—it distributed the wear over the bands and wore them all down evenly. That was the big trick, to wear all the bands down evenly, so that the final chattering would be total and the whole unit scream for renewal.

The days were golden, the nights were dim and strange. I still recall with trembling those loud, nocturnal crises when you drew up to a signpost and raced the engines so the lights would be bright enough to read destinations by. I have never been really planetary since. I suppose it's time to say goodbye. Farewell, my lovely!

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY:

"I wish I had written

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

from WALDEN

by HENRY D. THOREAU"

Mr. Canby, editor, essayist and biographer, could be deservedly called "the dean of American letters." Author of books of literary criticism and textbooks on English composition, Mr. Canby is hailed as well for THOREAU: A BIOGRAPHY and WALT WHITMAN, AN AMERICAN. Mr. Canby makes the following comment on his selection: "Chapter II of Henry D. Thoreau's WALDEN—a book that has gone round the world—is well adapted for excerpting, since each chapter in WALDEN is really an essay in itself. I choose this one particularly, because it contains the heart of Thoreau's philosophy of living. But not only for this reason. 'Where I Lived, and What I Lived For' is admirably written. Thoreau's style reaches its peak here. And because the chapter is in many places prose of such beauty and elevation as to have the effect upon the imagination of the best poetry, the philosophy which is its base says far more to the mind than the mere thought which it includes. This is the proper function of literature, seldom so well put into action as here."

AT A certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took

From WALDEN, reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers of THOREAU'S WORKS.

Henry Seidel Canby

his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man with-

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

out any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute.

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rime, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of

Henry Seidel Canby

the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale—I have always cultivated a garden—was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose “*De Re Rusticâ*” is my “Cultivator,” says,—and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage,—“When you think of getting a farm turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good.” I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within-doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain,

Henry Seidel Canby

its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hilltop near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills, to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but dry land.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;—

There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by.

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best

Henry Seidel Canby

things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bears its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despised of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it,

Henry Seidel Canby

whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to Heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose, and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have

Henry Seidel Canby

dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last sig-

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

nificant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger! The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, "Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure.

Henry Seidel Canby

I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it.

Henry Seidel Canby

My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

CLARE BOOTHE LUCE:

"I wish I had written

The Hound of Heaven

by FRANCIS THOMPSON"

Mrs. Luce, the charmingly versatile Congresswoman from Connecticut, author of THE WOMEN, KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE, and many stories and magazine articles, in selecting this profound poem by the English poet, has said, "It is, of course, prideful folly for anyone to even wish that he or she might have written 'The Hound of Heaven.'

"'The Hound of Heaven' is the most powerful spiritual poem in the whole English language. I have read it perhaps a hundred times. It would be better to read it five hundred times and then to wish simply for the grace to understand it."

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
 And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

From THE COMPLETE WORKS OF FRANCIS THOMPSON, reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland, and Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., London.

Clare Boothe Luce

They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

I pleaded, out law-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
 Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);
But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
 Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon—
 With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over
 From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
 Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

The Hound of Heaven

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.”

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children’s eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

“Come then, ye other children, Nature’s—share
With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother’s vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”

So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature’s secracies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise,
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

Clare Boothe Luce

All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake by drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy.
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
“Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.”

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;

The Hound of Heaven

I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
 I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears.
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutaniest;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—
 Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

 From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity:
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again;

 But not ere him who summoneth

Clare Boothe Luce

I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
“And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing,
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught” (He said),
“And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.”

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
“Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.”

WILLIAM SAROYAN:

"I wish I had written

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

from AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS

by FLANN O'BRIEN"

Mr. Saroyan, of play, novel, short story, essay, poem and preface fame, can always be depended upon to deliver something arresting and interesting. THE HUMAN COMEDY, THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE, THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE, or your own Saroyan favorite will testify to that. Some of the Saroyan flavor can be seen in this excerpt from the first novel of a Dubliner who (in Mr. Saroyan's words) "seems to me one of the most interesting writers in the world. O'Brien's writing is fun and I like fun. But while I wish I had written this, I don't really mind at all that I haven't, for if a thing is written, that is good enough for anybody, and when a thing well-written is well-read the reader is almost helplessly turned into the writer anyway. In short, if it is written and I have read it I have also written it, and that is where the joy of reading lies for everybody. He is the best writer who makes writers of the most people."

IT WAS the shine of the morning sun, diluted though it was by the tangle of the forest and the sacking on the windows, that recalled the Pooka MacPhellimey from his heavy sleep by the side of his wife. He awoke with a frown and made a magic pass in the air with his thumb, thus awakening also the beetles and the maggots and the other evil creeping things that were slumbering throughout the forest under the flat of great stones. He then lay on his back with his eyes half-closed and his sharp-nailed hands cupped together in the scrub of his poll, uttering his maledictions and his matins in an undertone

From AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS, reprinted by permission of the author. Published by Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.

William Saroyan

and reflecting on the hump of his clubfoot in the bed in the morning. His shank of a wife beside him was hidden and not easy to discern, a black evil wrinkle in the black sackcloth quilts, a shadow. The Pooka was for taking a hold of his pipe, his pen-knife and his twist of plug-tabacca—he had the three by him—for a morning smoke in bed when the boards of the door were urgently knocked from without and afterwards put in.

Welcome to my house, said the Pooka courteously, tapping his pipe on the bedrail and placing the clubfoot sideways the way no remarks would be passed on the hump. He looked at the empty door with polite inquiry but there was no one there and the party responsible for the knocking could not easily be discerned in any quarter.

Be pleased to come in and welcome, the Pooka said a second time, it is seldom I am honoured by a caller in the morning early.

I am already in the middle of your fine house, said a small voice that was sweeter by far than the tinkle and clap of a waterfall and brighter than the first shaft of day. I am standing here on the flag with the elliptical crack in it.

Welcome to my poor hut, said the Pooka as he surveyed the floor, and it is a queer standing. I do not see you there.

I have come to visit you, said the voice, and to spend an hour in fine talk, and to enter into a colloquy with you.

It is early talking, said the Pooka, but welcome to my house. Your surname, that is a secret that I respect.

My correct name is Good Fairy, said the Good Fairy. I am a good fairy. It is a fine secret but one that is so big that each of us may share it with the other. As to the hour of my advent in your house, it is never too early of a morning for sapient colloquy. Likewise, never is it too late of an evening either.

Under the murk of the bedclothes, the Pooka was fingering the dark hairs of his wife's head—a token that he was engaged in fine thought.

On account of the fact, he said gentlemanly, that I have at all times purposely refrained from an exhaustive exercise of my faculty of vision and my power of optical inspection (I refer now to things

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

perfectly palpable and discernible—the coming of dawn across the mountains is one example and the curious conduct of owls and bats in strong moonlight is another), I had expected (foolishly, perhaps), that I should be able to see quite clearly things that are normally not visible at all as a compensation for my sparing inspection of the visible. It is for that reason that I am inclined to regard the phenomenon of a voice unsupported by a body (more especially at an hour that is acknowledged as inimical to phantasy), as a delusion, one of the innumerable hallucinations which can be traced to lapses from plain diet and to reckless over-eating at bed-time, figments of the large gut rather than of the brain. It is perhaps not altogether irrelevant to mention that last night I finished the last delectable (if indigestible), portion of a queer confection that was prepared in that pan there in the corner. Last night I ate a loins.

Your talk surprises me, said the Good Fairy. Was it the loins of a beetle, or a monkey, or a woman?

Two loinses I ate, replied the Pooka, the loins of a man and the loins of a dog and I cannot remember which I ate the first or which was tasted sweeter. But two loinses I had in all.

I recognize that that is good eating, said the Good Fairy, though myself I have no body that I could feed. As a feat of eating it is first-rate.

I hear what you say, said the Pooka, but from what quarter are you speaking?

I am sitting here, said the Good Fairy, in a white cup on the dresser.

There are four coppers in that cup, said the Pooka, be careful of them. The truth is that I would ill like to be at the loss of them.

I have no pockets, said the Good Fairy.

That surprises me, said the Pooka raising his thick eyebrows till they were mixed with his hair, that surprises me certainly and by the hokey I do not understand how you can manage without the convenience of a pocket. The pocket was the first instinct of humanity and was used long years before the human race had a trousers be-

William Saroyan

tween them—the quiver for arrows is one example and the pouch of the kangaroo is another. Where do you keep your pipe?

It is cigarettes I smoke, said the Good Fairy, and I disincline to think that kangaroos are human.

That time you spoke, said the Pooka, it is of course a secret where your voice came from?

When I spoke last, said the Good Fairy, I was kneeling in the cup of your navel but it is bad country and I am there no longer.

Do you tell me that, said the Pooka. This here beside me is my wife.

That is why I left, said the Good Fairy.

There are two meanings in your answer, said the Pooka with his smile of depreciation, but if your departure from my poor bed was actuated solely by a regard for chastity and conjugal fidelity, you are welcome to remain between the blankets without the fear of anger in your host, for there is safety in a triad, chastity is truth and truth is an odd number. And your statement that kangaroos are not human is highly debatable.

Even if it were desirable, replied the Good Fairy, angelic or spiritual carnality is not easy and in any case the offspring would be severely handicapped by being half flesh and half spirit, a very baffling and neutralizing assortment of fractions since the two elements are forever at variance. An act of quasi-angelic carnality on the part of such issue would possibly result in further offspring consisting in composition of a half caro plus half the sum of a half and half caro and spiritus, that is, three-quarters caro and a quarter spiritus. Further carry-on would again halve the spiritual content of the progeny and so on until it becomes zero, thus bringing us by geometric progression to an ordinary love-child with nothing but an unrepresented tradition on the spiritual or angelic side. In regard to the humanity of kangaroos, to admit a kangaroo unreservedly to be a man would inevitably involve one in a number of distressing implications, the kangaroosity of women and your wife beside you being one example.

Your granny, said the Pooka's wife lifting the flap of the blankets the way her voice could be let out.

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

If we take the view, observed the Pooka, that the angelic element can be eliminated by ordered breeding, it follows that the flesh can be reduced by an opposite process, so that the spectacle of an unmarried mother with a houseful of adult and imperceptible angels is not really the extravagance that it would first appear to be. As an alternative to the commonplace family, the proposition is by no means unattractive because the saving in clothes and doctors' bills would be unconscionable and the science of shop-lifting could be practised with such earnestness as would be compatible with the attainment and maintenance of a life of comfort and culture. I would not be in the least surprised to learn that my wife is a kangaroo, for any hypothesis would be more tenable than the assumption that she is a woman.

Your name, said the Good Fairy, is one thing that you have not related to me privately. There is nothing so important as the legs in determining the kangaroolity of a woman. Is there for example fur on your wife's legs, Sir?

My name, said the Pooka, with an apologetic solicitude, is Fergus MacPhellimey and I am by calling a devil or pooka. Welcome to my poor house. I cannot say whether there is fur on my wife's legs for I have never seen them nor do I intend to commit myself to the folly of looking at them. In any event and in all politeness—nothing would be further from me than to insult a guest—I deem the point you have made as unimportant because there is surely nothing in the old world to prevent a deceitful kangaroo from shaving the hair off her legs, assuming she is a woman.

I knew you were of the Pooka class, said the Good Fairy, but your name, that much escaped me. Taking it for granted that the art of the razor is known to kangaroos as a class, by what subterfuge could the tail be passed off for something different from what it is?

The vocation of the pooka, said the Pooka, is one that is fraught with responsibilities, not the least of these being the lamming and leathering of such parties as are sent to me for treatment by Number One, which is the First Good and the Primal Truth and necessarily an odd number. My own personal number is Two. As regards the

William Saroyan

second objection you make about the tail, I must state that I personally belong to a class that is accustomed to treat with extreme suspicion all such persons as are unprovided with tails. Myself I have two tails in the bed here, my own tail of loose hair and the tail of my nightshirt. When I wear two shirts on a cold day, you might say that I appear to have three tails in all?

I find your commentary on the subject of your duties a matter of absorbing interest, said the Good Fairy, and I find myself in agreement with your conception of the Good and the Bad Numerals. It is for that reason that I consider the wearing of two shirts by you a deplorable lapse since it must result as you say in three tails in all and truth is an odd number. It is indisputable, whatever about the tail, that a woman kangaroo is provided with a built-in bag where youngsters and trinklets may be stored until such time as they are required —did you ever notice, Sir, that things were missing about the house where your wife might have put them in her sack for hiding?

I am afraid, replied the Pooka, that you are mistaken in the matter of my tails for I have never worn less than two or more than twenty-four at the one time and together, notwithstanding anything I have confided in you this fine morning. Your personal difficulty will be resolved when I tell you that my second-best day-shirt is fitted with two tails, the one longer than the other, thus enabling me to intermix the physical comfort of two shirts on a cold day with the ceremonial probity of four tails about my bottom (the four of them moving in unison in my trousers when I waggle my hair-tail). I never permit myself to forget that truth is an odd number and that my own personal numerals, the first and the last and all intermediaries, are all inevitably even. I have frequently missed these small things which are necessitous to personal comfort—my glasses and the black glove I use for moving the pan from the hob when it is hot, these are two examples. It is not impossible that my kangaroo has hidden them in her pouch, for by the hoke there was never a child there. To inquire the character of the weather you encountered in your travels here to my poor house from where you were, that would be deplorable violation of your status as a guest?

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

As regards the vexed question of the little tails, said the Good Fairy, I accept without question your explanation concerning your bi-tailed shirt, a device that I commend as ingenious. By what sophistry of mathematics, however, do you preserve your even numeral when the exigencies of social etiquette compel you to resort to the white waistcoat and the tail-coat of an evening? That is one point that perplexes me. It is very regrettable that a man of your years can be put to the loss of his glasses and his black glove for life is very narrow without glasses and a burnt hand is a bugger. The weather I experienced was wet and windy but that did not affect me in the least because I am without a body to be incommoded and I wear no suit that could be seeped.

There is little substance, said the Pooka, in your difficulty about the dress-coat for the tail of such an elegant garment has a split through the middle of it that makes it into two tails, which makes four tails in company with my own tail and my shirt-tail, or twelve tails in all with nine shirts. When I come to think of it, I have also missed a pig-iron coal-scuttle and a horsehair arm-chair and a ball of twine and a parcel of peats. I am perfectly sure that spirit though you be you would be troubled by a fog, for there are few things so spiritual or permeaty as a wispy fog, or that at least is my experience, because people who suffer from consumption complain most and frequently die when there is fog in the air. I make it a practice to inquire courteously of everyone I meet whether they can inform me as to the oddity or otherwise of the last number, I mean, will it be an odd one and victory for you and your people, or an even one and the resolution of heaven and hell and the world in my favour. And the question I ask you in conclusion is this, where did your talk come from the last time you talked?

Once again, said the Good Fairy, I find myself in the happy position of being enabled to accept your answer about the tail-coat and I am much beholden to you. But there is this troubling me now, that there might be a heresy in your hair—for the number of such strands might well be odd and the truth is never even. Your enumeration of the matters you have missed about the house, that was an absorb-

William Saroyan

ing recital, and I am sure that you can retrieve the lot of them by catching the kangaroo when she is least expectant of rough play and inverting or upturning her the way all that is in her will fall out upon the flags of the kitchen. It is a mistake to think that ghosts and spirits are adversely affected by fogs and vapours (though it is quite possible that a consumptive or weak-chested spirit would find such an atmosphere far from salubrious). I would personally be a happier being if I could solve the riddle that you mention, viz., the character of the last number. When I spoke the last I was skating on that hard lard in the pan and I am now at present resting myself in an egg-cup.

The Pooka's face, at all times flushed and red, now changed to the colour of a withered acorn as he arose and propped himself by the elbows on the pillow.

In referring to my hair, he said with a strain of gentle anger in his voice, are you sure that you are not endeavouring to annoy me, or (worse still) to take a rise out of me? And when you give me the advice to invert my kangaroo the way my lost property will fall out on the hard stones of my poor kitchen, have you a mind to have my glasses smashed? Is it not so that good spirits are very vulnerable when there is fog because they have only one lung as a result of the fact that truth is an odd number? Are you aware of this, that your own existence was provoked by the vitality of my own evil, just as my own being is a reaction to the rampant goodness of Number One, that is, the Prime Truth, and that another pooka whose number will be Four must inevitably appear as soon as your own benevolent activities are felt to require a corrective? Has it never flitted across your mind that the riddle of the last number devolves on the ultimate appearance of a pooka or good spirit who will be so feeble a force for good or bad (as the case may be), that he will provoke no reagent and thus become himself the last and ultimate numeral—all bringing us to the curious and humiliating conclusion that the character of the Last Numeral devolves directly on the existence of a party whose chief characteristics must be anaemia, ineptitude, incapacity, inertia and a spineless dereliction of duty? Answer me that!

As a matter of fact, said the Good Fairy, I do not understand two

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

words of what you have said and I do not know what you are talking about. Do you know how many subordinate clauses you used in that last oration of yours, Sir?

I do not, replied the Pooka.

Fifteen subordinate clauses in all, said the Good Fairy, and the substance of each of them contained matter sufficient for a colloquy in itself. There is nothing so bad as the compression of fine talk that should last for six hours into one small hour. Tell me, Sir, did you ever study Bach?

Where did you say that from? inquired the Pooka.

I was sitting under your bed, replied the Good Fairy, on the handle of your pot.

The fugal and contrapuntal character of Bach's work, said the Pooka, that is a delight. The orthodox fugue has four figures and such a number is in itself admirable. Be careful of that pot. It is a present from my grandmother.

Counterpoint is an odd number, said the Good Fairy, and it is a great art that can evolve a fifth Excellence from four Futilities.

I do not agree with that, said the Pooka courteously. Here is a thing you have not informed me on—that is—the character of your sex. Whether you are a man-angel, that is a conundrum personal to yourself and not to be discussed with strangers.

It seems to me, Sir, said the Good Fairy, that you are again endeavoring to engage me in multi-clause colloquy. If you do not cease from it I will enter into your ear and you will not like it at all, I will warrant you that. My sex is a secret that I cannot reveal.

I only inquired, said the Pooka, because I had a mind to get up and put on my clothes because long bed-hours are enemies and a new day is a thing to be experienced while it is still fresh. I will now do so and if you are of the woman class I must courteously request you to turn your back. And if that piteous itching in my left ear is due to your presence in the inside of it, please take yourself out of there immediately and return to the cup with the four coppers in it.

I have no back that I could turn, said the Good Fairy.

All right, I will rise in that case, said the Pooka, and if it is a

William Saroyan

useful occupation you desire, you could occupy your time with taking the tree out of my club-boot in the corner there.

By Hickory, said the Good Fairy in an earnest voice, it is full time that I gave you tidings concerning the purpose and the reason for my morning visit to your fine house here. I have come to inform you, Sir, about a party by the name of Sheila Lamont.

The Pooka had arisen with modest grace and was removing his silk nightshirt and reaching for his well-cut suit of seaman's kerseymere.

Where did you say that from? he inquired.

I am reclining in the key-hole, replied the Good Fairy.

The Pooka had put on his black underdrawers and his grey trousers and his old-world cravat and was engaged with his hands behind him in a fastidious adjustment of his tail of hair.

You did not inform me, he remarked politely, as to the sex of Miss Lamont.

As a matter of fact, said the Good Fairy, she is a woman.

That is very satisfactory, said the Pooka.

She is suffering at the moment, said the Good Fairy with the shadow of a slight frown on the texture of his voice, from a very old complaint. I refer now to pregnancy.

Do you tell me so? said the Pooka with a polite interest. That is very satisfactory.

The child is expected, said the Good Fairy, to-morrow evening. I shall be there and shall endeavour to put the child under my benevolent influence for life. To go there alone, however, without informing you of the happy event, that would be a deplorable breach of etiquette. Let the pair of us go therefore, and let the best man of us win the day.

That is a fine saying and a noble sentiment, said the Pooka, but tell me where it came from in the name of Goodness.

From your wife's hair, replied the Good Fairy. I am here in the dark, and it is a hard and joyless country:

I don't doubt it, said the Pooka. Did you tell me that this Miss Lamont was a man?

The Pooka and the Good Fairy

I did not, said the Good Fairy. She is a woman and a fine one from the point of view of those that have bodies on them.

That is very satisfactory, said the Pooka.

He carefully arranged the folds of his cravat before a piece of a looking-glass that was nailed to the back of the rough door. He then sprinkled an odorous balsam on his hair.

This party that you talk so much about, he inquired, where does it live?

Over there, said the Good Fairy with a jerk of his thumb, beyant.

If I could only see your thumb the time you jerked it, said the Pooka, I might know what you are talking about.

Hurry, said the Good Fairy.

What will we bring along with us against the journey? asked the Pooka. I am sure it is a long one and one that will soak our eyebrows with the sweat.

Bring what you like, said the Good Fairy.

Should I bring my shank of a wife—the party in the bed over there beyant?

I would not advise it, said the Good Fairy.

A change of black small-trunks? asked the Pooka.

When I have none at all, said the Good Fairy, it would not be right for you to have more than one pair.

The Pooka nodded courteously and carefully dressed himself in a soberly-cut raincoat of grey kerseymere with a built-in cape and an astrakhan collar and then took a hold of his black velour and his walking-stick. All things were then put in order about the house, pans were heeled up on their ends as a precaution against smuts, the fire was tended with black peats, and fine crocks were settled with their butts in the air. Everything was looked after down to the last acorn, which was retrieved from the floor and thrown out through the window.

Where are you now? asked the Pooka.

I am here, replied the Good Fairy, on the flag with the elliptical crack in it.

William Saroyan

Pardon me for a moment if you please, said the Pooka with a small bow towards the cracked flag, I wish to take leave of my family.

He approached the bed with a tender solicitude the way he could put his hand in under the clothes. He caressed her rough cheek, hanging his stick on the rail.

Good-bye, my dear, he said tenderly.

UPTON SINCLAIR:

*“I wish I had written these
Passages on Social Justice”*

by JOHN RUSKIN and ISAIAH”

Mr. Sinclair, the creator of Lanny Budd and author of innumerable books and pamphlets on social justice, the subject closest to his heart, wrote THE JUNGLE, WORLD'S END, DRAGON'S TEETH (1943 Pulitzer Prize novel) and other novels. Of these paragraphs, which were included in Mr. Sinclair's CRY FOR JUSTICE, he has this to say, “I came upon these passages in my student days and they helped to guide my life. They are scientifically exact in their economic statements. They are imbued with moral passion, and they are written in excellent prose.”

The Veins of Wealth

by JOHN RUSKIN

PRIMARILY, which is very notable and curious, I observe that men of business rarely know the meaning of the word “rich.” At least if they know, they do not in their reasonings allow for the fact, that it is a relative word, implying its opposite “poor” as positively as the word “north” implies its opposite “south.” Men nearly always speak and write as if riches were absolute, and it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself. The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbor’s pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you; the degree of power it possesses depends accurately upon the need or desire he has for it,—and the art of making yourself rich, in

Upton Sinclair

the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbor poor.

Ad Valorem

by JOHN RUSKIN

IN A community regulated by laws of demand and supply, but protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, covetous, prompt, methodical, sensible, unimaginative, insensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the idle, the reckless, the humble, the thoughtful, the dull, the imaginative, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident, the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, the open thief, and the entirely merciful, just, and godly person.

I feel the force of mechanism and the fury of avaricious commerce to be at present so irresistible, that I have seceded from the study not only of architecture, but nearly of all art; and have given myself, as I would in a besieged city, to seek the best modes of getting bread and water for its multitudes.

For my own part, I will put up with this state of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else I like, and the very light of the morning sky has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.

The Co-operative Commonwealth

by ISAIAH, The Prophet of the Exile

AND they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE:

"I wish I had written

The Return

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON"

Mr. Steele, widely known and frequently honored for his short stories, is also the author of the recent best-selling novel THAT GIRL FROM MEMPHIS. "The story I most wish I might have written," says Mr. Steele, "is Sherwood Anderson's 'The Return.' To me, this is because it was written about me. To you it would be because it was written about you. To millions and millions of others it would be the same, through the ages."

EIGHTEEN years. Well, he was driving a good car, an expensive roadster, he was well clad, a rather solid, fine-looking man, not too heavy. When he had left the Middle-Western town to go live in New York City he was twenty-two, and now, on his way back there, he was forty. He drove toward the town from the east, stopping for lunch at another town ten miles away.

When he went away from Caxton, after his mother died, he used to write letters to friends at home, but after several months the replies began to come with less and less frequency. On the day when he sat eating his lunch at a small hotel in the town ten miles east of Caxton he suddenly thought of the reason, and was ashamed. "Am I going back there on this visit for the same reason I wrote the letters?" he asked himself. For a moment he thought he might not go on. There was still time to turn back.

Outside, in the principal business street of the town, people were walking about. The sun shone warmly. Although he had lived for

From DEATH IN THE WOODS. Copyright, 1933, by Sherwood Anderson, reprinted by permission of Liveright Publishing Corp.

The Return

so many years in New York, he had always kept, buried away in him somewhere, a hankering for his own country. All the day before he had been driving through the Eastern Ohio country, crossing many small streams, running down through small valleys, seeing the white farmhouses set back from the road, and the big red barns.

The elders were still in bloom along the fences, boys were swimming in a creek, the wheat had been cut, and now the corn was shoulder-high. Everywhere the drone of bees; in patches of woodland along the road a heavy, mysterious silence.

Now, however, he began thinking of something else. Shame crept over him. "When I first left Caxton, I wrote letters back to my boyhood friends there, but I wrote always of myself. When I had written a letter telling what I was doing in the city, what friends I was making, what my prospects were, I put, at the very end of the letter, perhaps, a little inquiry: 'I hope you are well. How are things going with you?' Something of that sort."

The returning native—his name was John Holden—had grown very uneasy. After eighteen years it seemed to him he could see, lying before him, one of the letters written eighteen years before when he had first come into the strange Eastern city. His mother's brother, a successful architect in the city, had given him such and such an opportunity: he had been at the theater to see Mansfield as Brutus; he had taken the night boat up-river to Albany with his aunt; there were two very handsome girls on the boat.

Everything then must have been in the same tone. His uncle had given him a rare opportunity, and he had taken advantage of it. In time he had also become a successful architect. In New York City there were certain great buildings, two or three skyscrapers, several huge industrial plants, any number of handsome and expensive residences, that were the products of his brain.

When it came down to the scratch, John Holden had to admit that his uncle had not been excessively fond of him. It had just happened that his aunt and uncle had no children of their own. He did his work in the office well and carefully, had developed a certain rather striking knack for design. The aunt had liked him better. She

Wilbur Daniel Steele

had always tried to think of him as her own son, had treated him as a son. Sometimes she called him son. Once or twice, after his uncle died, he had a notion. His aunt was a good woman, but sometimes he thought she would rather have enjoyed having him, John Holden, go in a bit more for wickedness, go a little on the loose, now and then. He never did anything she had to forgive him for. Perhaps she hungered for the opportunity to forgive.

Odd thoughts, eh? Well, what was a fellow to do? One had but the one life to live. One had to think of oneself.

Botheration! John Holden had rather counted on the trip back to Caxton, had really counted on it more than he realized. It was a bright summer day. He had been driving for days over the mountains of Pennsylvania, through New York State, through Eastern Ohio. Gertrude, his wife, had died during the summer before, and his one son, a lad of twelve, had gone away for the summer to a boys' camp in Vermont.

The idea had just come to him. "I'll drive the car along slowly through the country, drinking it in. I need a rest, time to think. What I really need is to renew old acquaintances. I'll go back to Caxton and stay several days. I'll see Herman and Frank and Joe. Then I'll go call on Lillian and Kate. What a lot of fun, really!" It might just be that when he got to Caxton, the Caxton ball team would be playing a game, say with the team from Yerington. Lillian might go to the game with him. It was in his mind faintly that Lillian had never married. How did he know that? He had heard nothing from Caxton for many years. The ball game would be in Heffler's field, and he and Lillian would go out there, walking under the maple trees along Turner Street, past the old stave factory, then in the dust of the road, past where the sawmill used to stand, and on into the field itself. He would be carrying a sunshade over Lillian's head, and Bob French would be standing at the gate where you went into the field and charging the people twenty-five cents to see the game.

Well, it would not be Bob; his son, perhaps. There would be something very nice in the notion of Lillian's going off to a ball game

The Return

that way with an old sweetheart. A crowd of boys, women and men, going through a cattle gate into Heffler's field, tramping through the dust, young men with their sweethearts, a few gray-haired women, mothers of boys who belonged to the team, Lillian and he sitting in the rickety grandstand in the hot sun.

Once it had been—how they had felt, he and Lillian, sitting there together! It had been rather hard to keep the attention centered on the players in the field. One couldn't ask a neighbor, "Who's ahead now, Caxton or Yerington?" Lillian's hands lay in her lap. What white, delicate, expressive hands they were! Once—that was just before he went away to live in the city with his uncle and but a month after his mother died—he and Lillian went to the ball field together at night. His father had died when he was a young lad, and he had no relatives left in the town. Going off to the ball field at night was maybe a risky thing for Lillian to do—risky for her reputation if anyone found it out—but she had seemed willing enough. You know how small-town girls of that age are.

Her father owned a retail shoe store in Caxton, and was a good, respectable man; but the Holdens—John's father had been a lawyer.

After they got back from the ball field that night—it must have been after midnight—they went to sit on the front porch before her father's house. He must have known. A daughter cavorting about half the night with a young man that way! They had clung to each other with a sort of queer, desperate feeling neither understood. She did not go into the house until after three o'clock, and went then only because he insisted. He hadn't wanted to ruin her reputation. Why, he might have . . . She was like a little frightened child at the thought of his going away. He was twenty-two then, and she must have been about eighteen.

Eighteen and twenty-two are forty. John Holden was forty on the day when he sat at lunch at the hotel in the town ten miles from Caxton.

Now, he thought, he might be able to walk through the streets of Caxton to the ball park with Lillian with a certain effect. You know how it is. One has to accept the fact that youth is gone. If there

Wilbur Daniel Steele

should turn out to be such a ball game and Lillian would go with him, he would leave the car in the garage and ask her to walk. One saw pictures of that sort of thing in the movies—a man coming back to his native village after twenty years; a new beauty taking the place of the beauty of youth—something like that. In the Spring the leaves on maple trees are lovely, but they are even more lovely in the Fall—a flame of color—manhood and womanhood.

After he had finished his lunch John did not feel very comfortable. The road to Caxton—it used to take nearly three hours to travel the distance with a horse and buggy, but now, and without any effort, the distance could be made in twenty minutes.

He lit a cigar and went for a walk not in the streets of Caxton, but in the streets of the town ten miles away. If he got to Caxton in the evening, just at dusk, say, now . . .

With an inward pang John realized that he wanted darkness, the kindness of soft evening lights. Lillian, Joe, Herman and the rest. It had been eighteen years for the others as well as for himself. Now he had succeeded, a little, in twisting his fear of Caxton into fear for the others, and it made him feel somewhat better; but at once he realized what he was doing and again felt uncomfortable. One had to look out for changes, new people, new buildings, middle-aged people grown old, youth grown middle-aged. At any rate, he was thinking of the other now. He wasn't, as when he wrote letters home eighteen years before, thinking only of himself. "Am I?" It was a question.

An absurd situation, really. He had sailed along so gaily through upper New York State, through Western Pennsylvania, through Eastern Ohio. Men were at work in the fields and in the towns, farmers drove into towns in their cars, clouds of dust arose on some distant road, seen across a valley. Once he had stopped his car near a bridge and gone for a walk along the banks of a creek where it wound through a wood.

He was liking people. Well, he had never before given much time to people, to thinking of them and their affairs. "I hadn't time," he told himself. He had always realized that, while he was a good

The Return

enough architect, things move fast in America. New men were coming on. He couldn't take chances of going on forever on his uncle's reputation. A man had to be always on the alert. Fortunately, his marriage had been a help. It had made valuable connections for him.

Twice he had picked up people on the road. There was a lad of sixteen from some town of Eastern Pennsylvania, working his way westward toward the Pacific coast by picking up rides in cars—a Summer's adventure. John had carried him all of one day and had listened to his talk with keen pleasure. And so this was the younger generation. The boy had nice eyes and an eager, friendly manner. He smoked cigarettes, and once, when they had a puncture, he was very quick and eager about changing the tire. "Now, don't you soil your hands, Mister, I can do it like a flash," he said, and he did. The boy said he intended working his way overland to the Pacific Coast, where he would try to get a job of some kind on an ocean freighter, and that, if he did, he would go on around the world. "But do you speak any foreign languages?" The boy did not. Across John Holden's mind flashed pictures of hot Eastern deserts, crowded Asiatic towns, wild half-savage mountain countries. As a young architect, and before his uncle died, he had spent two years in foreign travel, studying building in many countries; but he said nothing of this thought to the boy. Vast plans entered into with eager, boyish abandon, a world tour undertaken as he, when a young man, might have undertaken to find his way from his uncle's house in East Eighty-First Street downtown to the Battery. "How do I know—perhaps he will do it?" John thought. The day in company with the boy had been very pleasant, and he had been on the alert to pick him up again the next morning; but the boy had gone on his way, had caught a ride with some earlier riser. Why hadn't John invited him to his hotel for the night? The notion hadn't come to him until too late.

Youth, rather wild and undisciplined, running wild, eh? I wonder why I never did it, never wanted to do it.

If he had been a bit wilder, more reckless—that night, that time when he and Lillian . . . "It's all right being reckless with your-

Wilbur Daniel Steele

self, but when someone else is involved, a young girl in a small town, you yourself lighting out . . ." He remembered sharply that on the night, long before, as he sat with Lillian on the porch before her father's house his hand . . . It had seemed as though Lillian, on that evening, might not have objected to anything he wanted to do. He had thought—well, he had thought of the consequences. Women must be protected by men, all that sort of thing. Lillian had seemed rather stunned when he walked away, even though it was three o'clock in the morning. She had been rather like a person waiting at a railroad station for the coming of a train. There is a blackboard, and a strange man comes out and writes on it, "Train Number 287 has been discontinued"—something like that.

Well, it had been all right.

Later, four years later, he had married a New York woman of good family. Even in a city like New York, where there are so many people, her family had been well known. They had connections.

After marriage, sometimes, it is true, he had wondered. Gertrude used to look at him sometimes with an odd light in her eyes. That boy he picked up in the road—once during the day when he said something to the boy, the same queer look came into his eyes. It would be rather upsetting if one knew that the boy had purposely avoided him next morning. There had been Gertrude's cousin. Once, after his marriage, John heard a rumor that Gertrude had wanted to marry that cousin, but of course he had said nothing to her. Why should he have? She was his wife. There had been, he had heard, a good deal of family objection to the cousin. He was reputed to be wild, a gambler and drinker.

Once the cousin came to the Holden apartment at two in the morning, drunk and demanding that he be allowed to see Gertrude, and she slipped on a dressing-gown and went down to him. That was in the hallway of the apartment, downstairs, where almost anyone might have come in and seen her. As a matter of fact, the elevator boy and the janitor did see her. She had stood in the hallway below talking for nearly an hour. What about? He had never asked Gertrude directly, and she had never told him anything. When she came

The Return

upstairs again and had got into her bed, he lay in his own bed trembling, but remained silent. He had been afraid that if he spoke he might say something rude; better keep still. The cousin had disappeared. John had a suspicion that Gertrude later supplied him with money. He went out West somewhere.

Now Gertrude was dead. She had always seemed very well, but suddenly she was attacked by a baffling kind of slow fever that lasted nearly a year. Sometimes she seemed about to get better, and then suddenly the fever grew worse. It might be that she did not want to live. What a notion! John had been at the bedside with the doctor when she died. There was something of the same feeling he had that night of his youth when he went with Lillian to the ball field, an odd sense of inadequacy. There was no doubt that in some subtle way both women had accused him.

Of what? There had always been, in some vague, indefinable way, a kind of accusation in the attitude toward him of his uncle, the architect, and of his aunt. They had left him their money, but . . . It was as though the uncle had said, as though Lillian during that night long ago had said . . .

Had they all said the same thing, and was Gertrude his wife saying it as she lay dying? A smile. "You have always taken such good care of yourself, haven't you, John, dear? You have observed the rules. You have taken no chances for yourself or the others." She had actually said something of that sort to him once in a moment of anger.

II

In the small town ten miles from Caxton there wasn't any park to which a man could go to sit. If one stayed about the hotel, someone from Caxton might come in. "Hello, what are you doing here?" It would be inconvenient to explain. He had wanted the kindness of soft evening light, both for himself and the old friends he was to see again.

He began thinking of his son, now a boy of twelve. "Well," he said to himself, "his character has not begun to form yet." There was, as yet, in the son an unconsciousness of other people and a rather

Wilbur Daniel Steele

casual selfishness, an unawareness of others, an unhealthy sharpness about getting the best of others. It was a thing that should be corrected in him and at once. John Holden had got himself into a small panic. "I must write him a letter at once. Such a habit gets fixed in a boy and then in the man, and it cannot later be shaken off. There are such a lot of people living in the world! Every man and woman has his own point of view. To be civilized, really, is to be aware of the others, their hopes, their gladnesses, their illusions about life."

John Holden was now walking along a residence street of a small Ohio town, composing in fancy a letter to his son in the boys' camp up in Vermont. He was a man who wrote to his son every day. "I think a man should," he told himself. "He should remember that now the boy has no mother."

He had come to an outlying railroad station. It was neat with grass and flowers growing in a round bed in the very center of a lawn. Some man, the station agent and telegraph operator perhaps, passed him and went inside the station. John followed him in. On the wall of the waiting-room there was a framed copy of the time-table, and he stood studying it. A train went to Caxton at five. Another train came from Caxton and passed through the town he was now in at seven forty-three, the seven-nineteen out of Caxton. The man in the small business section of the station opened a sliding panel and looked at him. The two men just stared at each other without speaking, and then the panel was slid shut again.

John looked at his watch. Two twenty-eight. At about six he could drive over to Caxton and dine at the hotel there. After he had dined, it would be evening, and people would be coming into the main street.

The seven-nineteen would come in. When John was a lad, sometimes, he, Joe, Herman, and often several other lads had climbed on the front of the baggage or mail car and had stolen a ride to the very town he was now in. What a thrill, crouched down in the gathering darkness on the platform as the train ran the ten miles, the car rocking from side to side! When it got a little dark, in the Fall or Spring, the fields beside the track were lighted up when the fireman

The Return

opened his firebox to throw in coal. Once John saw a rabbit running along in the glare of light beside the track. He could have reached down and caught it with his hand. In the neighboring town the boys went into saloons and played pool and drank beer. They could depend upon catching a ride back home on the local freight that got to Caxton at about ten thirty. On one of the adventures John and Herman got drunk and Joe had to help them into an empty coal car and later get them out at Caxton. Herman got sick, and when they were getting off the freight at Caxton, he stumbled and came very near falling under the wheels of the moving train. John wasn't as drunk as Herman. When the others weren't looking, he had poured several of the glasses of beer into a spittoon. In Caxton he and Joe had to walk about with Herman for several hours and when John finally got home, his mother was still awake and was worried. He had to lie to her. "I drove out into the country with Herman, and a wheel broke. We had to walk home." The reason Joe could carry his beer so well was because he was a German. His father owned the town meat market, and the family had beer on the table at home. No wonder it did not knock him out as it did Herman and John.

There was a bench at the side of the railroad station, in the shade, and John sat there for a long time—two hours, three hours. Why hadn't he brought a book? In fancy he composed a letter to his son and in it he spoke of the fields lying beside the road outside the town of Caxton, of his greeting old friends there, of things that had happened when he was a boy. He even spoke of his former sweetheart, of Lillian. If he now thought out just what he was going to say in the letter, he could write it in his room at the hotel over in Caxton in a few minutes without having to stop and think what he was going to say. You can't always be too fussy about what you say to a young boy. Really, sometimes, you should take him into your confidence, into your life, make him a part of your life.

It was six twenty when John drove into Caxton and went to the hotel, where he registered, and was shown to a room. On the street as he drove into town he saw Billy Baker, who, when he was a young

Wilbur Daniel Steele

man, had a paralyzed leg that dragged along the sidewalk when he walked. Now he was getting old; his face seemed wrinkled and faded, like a dried lemon, and his clothes had spots down the front. People, even sick people, live a long time in small Ohio towns. It is surprising how they hang on.

John had put his car, of a rather expensive make, into a garage beside the hotel. Formerly, in his day, the building had been used as a livery barn. There used to be pictures of famous trotting and pacing horses on the walls of the little office at the front. Old Dave Grey, who owned race horses of his own, ran the livery barn then, and John occasionally hired a rig there. He hired a rig and took Lillian for a ride into the country, along moonlit roads. By a lonely farmhouse a dog barked. Sometimes they drove along a little dirt road lined with elders and stopped the horse. How still everything was! What a queer feeling they had! They couldn't talk. Sometimes they sat in silence thus, very near each other, for a long, long time. Once they got out of the buggy, having tied the horse to the fence, and walked in a newly cut hayfield. The cut hay lay all about in little cocks. John wanted to lie on one of the haycocks with Lillian, but did not dare suggest it.

At the hotel John ate his dinner in silence. There wasn't even a traveling salesman in the dining-room, and presently the proprietor's wife came and stood by his table to talk with him. They had a good many tourists, but this just happened to be a quiet day. Dull days came that way in the hotel business. The woman's husband was a traveling man and had bought the hotel to give his wife something to keep her interested while he was on the road. He was away from home so much! They had come to Caxton from Pittsburgh.

After he had dined, John went up to his room, and presently the woman followed. The door leading into the hall had been left open, and she came and stood in the doorway. Really, she was rather handsome. She only wanted to be sure that everything was all right, that he had towels and soap and everything he needed.

For a time she lingered by the door talking of the town.

"It's a good little town. General Hurst is buried here. You should

The Return

drive out to the cemetery and see the statue." He wondered who General Hurst was. In what war had he fought? Odd that he hadn't remembered about him. The town had a piano factory, and there was a watch company from Cincinnati talking of putting up a plant. "They figure there is less chance of labor trouble in a small town like this."

The woman went reluctantly away. As she was going along the hallway she stopped once and looked back. There was something a little queer. They were both self-conscious. "I hope you'll be comfortable," she said. At forty a man did not come home to his own home town to start . . . A traveling man's wife, eh? Well! Well!

At seven forty-five John went out for a walk on Main Street and almost at once he met Tom Ballard, who at once recognized him, a fact that pleased Tom. He bragged about it. "Once I see a face, I never forget. Well! Well!" When John was twenty-two Tom must have been about fifteen. His father was the leading doctor of the town. He took John in tow, walked back with him toward the hotel. He kept exclaiming: "I knew you at once. You haven't changed much, really."

Tom was in his turn a doctor, and there was about him something . . . Right away John guessed what it was. They went up into John's room, and John, having in his bag a bottle of whisky, poured Tom a drink, which he took somewhat too eagerly, John thought. There was talk. After Tom had taken the drink he sat on the edge of the bed, still holding the bottle John had passed to him. Herman was running a dray now. He had married Kit Small and had five kids. Joe was working for the International Harvester Company. "I don't know whether he's in town now or not. He's a trouble-shooter, a swell mechanic, a good fellow," Tom said. He drank again.

As for Lillian, mentioned with an air of being casual by John, he, John, knew of course that she had been married and divorced. There was some sort of trouble about another man. Her husband married again later, and now she lived with her mother, her father, the shoe merchant, having died. Tom spoke somewhat guardedly, as though protecting a friend.

Wilbur Daniel Steele

"I guess she's all right now, going straight and all. Good thing she never had any kids. She's a little nervous and queer; has lost her looks a good deal."

The two men went downstairs and, walking along Main Street, got into a car belonging to the doctor.

"I'll take you for a little ride," Tom said; but as he was about to pull away from the curb where the car had been parked, he turned and smiled at his passenger. "We ought to celebrate a little, account of your coming back here," he said. "What do you say to a quart?"

John handed him a ten-dollar bill, and he disappeared into a nearby drug store. When he came back he laughed.

"I used your name all right. They didn't recognize it. In the prescription I wrote out I said you had a general breakdown, that you needed to be built up. I recommended that you take a teaspoonful three times a day. Lord! my prescription book is getting almost empty." The drug store belonged to a man named Will Bennett. "You remember him, maybe. He's Ed Bennett's son; married Carrie Wyatt." The names were but dim things in John's mind. "This man is going to get drunk. He is going to try to get me drunk, too," he thought.

When they had turned out of Main Street and into Walnut Street they stopped midway between two street lights and had another drink, John holding the bottle to his lips, but putting his tongue over the opening. He remembered the evenings with Joe and Herman when he had secretly poured his beer into a spittoon. He felt cold and lonely. Walnut Street was one along which he used to walk, coming home late at night from Lillian's house. He remembered people who then lived along the street, and a list of names began running through his head. Often the names remained, but did not call up images of people. They were just names. He hoped the doctor would not turn the car into the street in which the Holdens had lived. Lillian had lived over in another part of town, in what was called "The Red House District." Just why it had been called that John did not know.

The Return

III

They drove silently along, up a small hill, and came to the edge of town, going south. Stopping before a house that had evidently been built since John's time, Tom sounded his horn.

"Didn't the fair grounds use to stand about here?" John asked. The doctor turned and nodded his head.

"Yes, just here," he said. He kept on sounding his horn, and a man and woman came out of the house and stood in the road beside the car.

"Let's get Maud and Alf and all go over to Lylse's Point," Tom said. He had indeed taken John into tow. For a time John wondered if he was to be introduced. "We got some hooch. Meet John Holden; used to live here years ago." At the fair grounds, when John was a lad, Dave Grey, the livery man, used to work out his race horses in the early morning. Herman, who was a horse enthusiast, dreaming of some day becoming a horseman, came often to John's house in the early morning and the two boys went off to the fair grounds without breakfast. Herman had got some sandwiches made of slices of bread and cold meat out of his mother's pantry. They went 'cross-lots, climbing fences and eating the sandwiches. In a meadow they had to cross there was heavy dew on the grass, and the meadow larks flew up before them. Herman had at least come somewhere near expressing in his life his youthful passion: he still lived about horses; he owned a dray. With a little inward qualm John wondered. Perhaps Herman ran a motor-truck.

The man and woman got into the car, the woman on the back seat with John, the husband in front with Tom, and they drove away to another house. John could not keep track of the streets they passed through. Occasionally he asked the woman, "What street are we in now?" They were joined by Maud and Alf, who also crowded into the back seat. Maud was a slender woman of twenty-eight or thirty, with yellow hair and blue eyes, and at once she seemed determined to make up to John. "I don't take more than an inch of room," she

Wilbur Daniel Steele

said, laughing and squeezing herself in between John and the first woman, whose name he could not later remember.

He rather liked Maud. When the car had been driven some eighteen miles along a gravel road, they came to Lylse's farmhouse, which had been converted into a road-house, and got out. Maud had been silent most of the way, but she sat very close to John, and as he felt cold and lonely, he was grateful for the warmth of her slender body. Occasionally she spoke to him in a half-whisper. "Ain't the night swell! Gee! I like it out in the dark this way."

Lylse's Point was at a bend of the Samson River, a small stream to which John as a lad had occasionally gone on fishing excursions with his father. Later he went out there several times with crowds of young fellows and their girls. They drove out then in Grey's old bus, and the trip out and back took several hours. On the way home at night they had great fun singing at the top of their voices and waking sleeping farmers along the road. Occasionally some of the party got out and walked for a ways. It was a chance for a fellow to kiss his girl when the others could not see. By hurrying a little, they could later easily enough catch up with the bus.

A rather heavy-faced Italian named Francisco owned Lylse's, and it had a dance hall and dining-room. Drinks could be had if you knew the ropes, and it was evident the doctor and his friends were old acquaintances. At once they declared John should not buy anything, the declaration, in fact, being made before he had offered. "You're our guest now; don't you forget that. When we come sometime to your town, then it will be all right," Tom said. He laughed. "And that makes me think. I forgot your change," he said, handing John a five-dollar bill. The whisky got at the drug store had been consumed on the way out, all except John and Maud drinking heartily. "I don't like the stuff. Do you, Mr. Holden?" Maud said and giggled. Twice during the trip out her fingers had crept over and touched lightly his fingers, and each time she had apologized. "Oh, do excuse me!" she said. John felt a little as he had felt earlier in the evening when the woman of the hotel had come to stand at the door of his room and had seemed reluctant about going away.

The Return

After they got out of the car at Lylse's, he felt uncomfortably old and queer. "What am I doing here with these people?" he kept asking himself. When they had got into the light, he stole a look at his watch. It was not yet nine o'clock. Several other cars, most of them, the doctor explained, from Yerington, stood before the door, and when they had taken several drinks of rather mild Italian red wine, all of the party except Maud and John went into the dance hall to dance. The doctor took John aside and whispered to him. "Lay off Maud," he said. He explained hurriedly that Alf and Maud had been having a row and that for several days they had not spoken to each other, although they lived in the same house, ate at the same table, and slept in the same bed. "He thinks she gets too gay with men," Tom explained. "You better look out a little."

The woman and man sat on a bench under a tree on the lawn before the house, and when the others had danced, they came out, bringing more drinks. Tom had got some more whisky. "It's moon, but pretty good stuff," he declared. In the clear sky overhead stars were shining, and when the others were dancing, John turned his head and saw across the road and between the trees that lined its banks the stars reflected in the water of the Samson. A light from the house fell on Maud's face, a rather strikingly lovely face in that light, but when looked at closely, rather petulant. "A good deal of the spoiled child in her," John thought.

She began asking him about life in the city of New York.

"I was there once, but for only three days. It was when I went to school in the East. A girl I knew lived there. She married a lawyer named Trigan, or something like that. You didn't know him. I guess."

And now there was a hungry, dissatisfied look on her face.

"God! I'd like to live in a place like that, not in this hole! There hadn't no man better tempt me." When she said that she giggled again. Once during the evening they walked across the dusty road and stood for a time by the river's edge, but got back to the bench before the others had finished their dance. Maud persistently refused to dance.

Wilbur Daniel Steele

At ten thirty, all of the others having got a little drunk, they drove back to town, Maud again sitting beside John. On the drive Alf went to sleep. Maud pressed her slender body against John's, and after two or three futile moves to which he made no special response, she boldly put her hand into his. The second woman and her husband talked with Tom of people they had seen at Lylse's. "Do you think there's anything up between Fanny and Joe? No; I think she's on the square."

They got to John's hotel at eleven-thirty, and, bidding them all good night, he went upstairs. Alf had awakened. When they were parting, he leaned out of the car and looked closely at John. "What did you say your name was?" he asked.

John went up a dark stairway and sat on the bed in his room. Lillian had lost her looks. She had married, and her husband had divorced her. Joe was a trouble-shooter. He worked for the International Harvester Company, a swell mechanic. Herman was a drayman. He had five kids.

Three men in a room next to John's were playing poker. They laughed and talked, and their voices came clearly to John. "You think so, do you? Well, I'll prove you're wrong." A mild quarrel began. As it was summer, the windows of John's room were open, and he went to one to stand, looking out. A moon had come up, and he could see down into an alleyway. Two men came out of a street and stood in the alleyway, whispering. After they left, two cats crept along a roof and began a love-making scene. The game in the next room broke up. John could hear voices in the hallway.

"Now, forget it. I tell you, you're both wrong." John thought of his son at the camp up in Vermont. "I haven't written him a letter today." He felt guilty.

Opening his bag, he took out paper and sat down to write; but after two or three attempts gave it up and put the paper away again. How fine the night had been as he sat on the bench beside the woman at Lylse's! Now the woman was in bed with her husband. They were not speaking to each other.

The Return

“Could I do it?” John asked himself, and then, for the first time that evening, a smile came to his lips.

“Why not?” he asked himself.

With his bag in his hand he went down the dark hallway and into the hotel office and began pounding on a desk. A fat old man with thin red hair and sleep-heavy eyes appeared from somewhere. John explained.

“I can’t sleep. I think I’ll drive on. I want to get to Pittsburgh and as I can’t sleep, I might as well be driving.” He paid his bill.

Then he asked the clerk to go and arouse the man in the garage, and gave him an extra dollar. “If I need gas, is there any place open?” he asked, but evidently the man did not hear. Perhaps he thought the question absurd.

He stood in the moonlight on the sidewalk before the door of the hotel and heard the clerk pounding on a door. Presently voices were heard, and the headlights of his car shone. The car appeared, driven by a boy. He seemed very alive and alert.

“I saw you out to Lylse’s,” he said, and, without being asked, went to look at the tank. “You’re all right; you got ‘most eight gallons,” he assured John as he climbed into the driver’s seat.

How friendly the car, how friendly the night! John was not one who enjoyed fast driving, but he went out of the town at very high speed. “You go down two blocks, turn to your right, and go three. There you hit the cement. Go right straight to the east. You can’t miss it.”

John was taking the turns at racing speed. At the edge of town someone shouted to him from the darkness, but he did not stop. He hungered to get into the road going east.

“I’ll let her out,” he thought. “Lord! It will be fun! I’ll let her out.”

WILLIAM MCFEE:

“I wish I had written

McAndrew's Hymn

by RUDYARD KIPLING”

Mr. McFee, novelist and essayist, is the author of the classic CASUALS OF THE SEA, THE HARBOURMASTER, SPENLOVE IN ARCADY, and a number of other excellent stories of the men who go down to the sea. Hosts of readers, familiar with Mr. McFee's blend of artistry and personal experiences as a former Chief Engineer, will readily appreciate why he wishes he had written Kipling's poem.

Lord, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of a dream,
An', taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.
From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God—
Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.
John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enormous, certain, slow—
Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—my “Institutio.”
I cannot get my sleep to-night; old bones are hard to please;
I'll stand the middle watch up here—alone wi' God an' these
My engines, after ninety days o' race an' rack an' strain
Through all the seas of all Thy world, slam-bangin' home again.
Slam-bang too much—they knock a wee—the crosshead-gibs are loose;
But thirty thousand mile o' sea has gied them fair excuse. . . .
Fine, clear an' dark—a full-draught breeze, wi' Ushant out o' sight,
An' Ferguson relievin' Hay. Old girl, ye'll walk to-night!
His wife's at Plymouth. . . . Seventy—One—Two—Three since he
began—
Three turns for Mistress Ferguson . . . an' who's to blame the man?

From THE SEVEN SEAS. Copyright, 1896, by Rudyard Kipling, reprinted by permission of Mrs. G. Bambridge, Doubleday and Company, Inc., and The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd.

McAndrew's Hymn

There's none at any port for me, by drivin' fast or slow,
Since Elsie Campbell went to Thee, Lord, thirty years ago.
(The year the *Sarah Sands* was burned. Oh roads we used to tread,
Fra' Maryhill to Pollokshaws—fra' Govan to Parkhead!)
Not but they're ceevil on the Board. Ye'll hear Sir Kenneth say:
"Good morrn, McAndrews! Back again? An' how's your bilge
to-day?"

Miscallin' technicalities but handin' me my chair
To drink Madeira wi' three Earls—the auld Fleet Engineer,
That started as a boiler-whelp—when steam and he were low.
I mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi' tow.
Ten pound was all the pressure then—Eh! Eh!—a man wad drive;
An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder' fifty-five!
We're creepin' on wi' each new rig—less weight an' larger power:
There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty knots an hour!
Thirty an' more. What I ha' seen since ocean-steam began
Leaves me no doot for the machine: but what about the man?
The man that counts, wi' all his runs, one million mile o' sea:
Four time the span from earth to moon. . . . How far, O Lord,
from Thee?

That wast beside him night an' day. Ye mind my first typhoon?
It scoughed the skipper on his way to jock wi' the saloon.
Three feet were on the stokehold floor—just slappin' to an' fro—
An' cast me on a furnace-door. I have the marks to show.
Marks! I ha' marks o' more than burns—deep in my soul an' black,
An' times like this, when things go smooth, my wickudness comes
back.

The sins o' four and forty years, all up an' down the seas,
Clack an' repeat like the valves half-fed. . . . Forgie's our tres-
passes.

Nights when I'd come on deck to mark, wi' envy in my gaze,
The couples kittlin' in the dark between the funnel stays;
Years when I raked the ports wi' pride to fill my cup o' wrong—
Judge not, O Lord, my steps aside at Gay Street in Hong-Kong!
Blot out the wastrel hours of mine in sin when I abode—

William McFee

Jane Harrigan's an' Number Nine, The Reddick an' Grant Road!
An' waur than all—my crownin' sin—rank blasphemy an' wild.
I was not four and twenty then—Ye wadna' judge a child?
I'd seen the Tropics first that run—new fruit, new smells, new air—
How could I tell—blind-fou wi' sun—the Deil was lurkin' there?
By day like playhouse-scenes the shore slid past our sleepy eyes;
By night those soft, lasceevious stars leered from those velvet skies,
In port (we used no cargo-steam) I'd daunder down the streets—
An ijjit grinnin' in a dream—for shells an' parakeets,
An' walkin'-sticks o' carved bamboo an' blowfish stuffed an' dried—
Fillin' my bunk wi' rubbishry the Chief put over-side.
Till, off Sumbawa Head, Ye mind; I heard a land-breeze ca'
Milk-warm wi' breath o' spice an' bloom: "McAndrews, come awa'!"
Firm, clear an' low—no haste, no hate—the ghostly whisper went,
Just statin' eevidential facts beyon' all argument:
"Your mither's God's a graspin' deil, the shadow o' yoursel',
"Got out o' books by meenisters clean daft on Heaven an' Hell.
"They mak' him in the Broomielaw, o' Glasgie cold an' dirt,
"A jealous, pridefu' fetich, lad, that's only strong to hurt,
"Ye'll not go back to Him again an' kiss His red-hot rod,
"But come wi' Us (Now, who were *They*?) an' know the Leevin'
God,
"That does not kipper souls for sport or break a life in jest,
"But swells the ripenin' cocoanuts an' ripes the woman's breast."
An' there it stopped: cut off: no more; that quiet, certain voice—
For me, six months o' twenty-four, to leave or take at choice.
'Twas on me like a thunderclap—it racked me through an' through—
Temptation past the show o' speech, unnamable an' new—
The Sin against the Holy Ghost? . . . An' under all, our screw.
That storm blew by but left behind her anchor-shiftin' swell,
Thou knowest all my heart an' mind, Thou knowest, Lord, I fell.
Third on the *Mary Gloster* then, and first that night in Hell!
Yet was Thy hand beneath my head; about my feet Thy care—
Fra' Deli clear to Torres Strait, the trial o' despair,
But when we touched the Barrier Reef Thy answer to my prayer!

McAndrew's Hymn

We dared na run that sea by night but lay an' held our fire,
An' I was drowzin' on the hatch—sick—sick wi' doubt an' tire:
"Better the sight of eyes that see than wanderin' o' desire!"
Ye mind that word? Clear as our gongs—again, an' once again,
When rippin' down through coral-trash ran out our moorin'-chain;
An' by Thy Grace I had the Light to see my duty plain.
Light on the engine-room—no more—clear as our carbons burn.
I've lost it since a thousand times, but never past return.

• • • • •

Obsairve! Per annum we'll have here two thousand souls aboard—
Think not I dare to justify myself before the Lord,
But—average fifteen hunder' souls safe-borne fra port to port—
I *am* o' service to my kind. Ye wadna' blame the thought?
Maybe they steam from grace to wrath—to sin by folly led,—
It isna mine to judge their path—their lives are on my head.
Mine at the last—when all is done it all comes back to me,
The fault that leaves six thousand ton a log upon the sea.
We'll tak' one stretch—three weeks an' odd by any road ye steer—
Fra' Cape Town east to Wellington—ye need an engineer.
Fail there—ye've time to weld your shaft—ay, eat it, ere ye're spoke,
Or make Kerguelen under sail—three jiggers burned wi' smoke!
An' home again, the Rio run: it's no child's play to go
Stamin' to bell for fourteen days o' snow an' floe an' blow—
The bergs like kelpies overside that girn an' turn an' shift
Whaur, grindin' like the Mills o' God, goes by the big South drift.
(Hail, snow an' ice that praise the Lord: I've met them at their work,
An' wished we had another route or they another kirk.)
Yon's strain, hard strain, o' head an' hand, for though Thy Power
brings

All skill to naught, Ye'll understand a man must think o' things.
Then, at the last, we'll get to port an' hoist their baggage clear—
The passengers, wi' gloves an' canes—an' this is what I'll hear:
"Well, thank ye for a pleasant voyage. The tender's comin' now."
While I go testin' follower-bolts an' watch the skipper bow.

William McFee

They've words for everyone but me—shake hands wi' half the crew,
Except the dour Scots engineer, the man they never knew.
An' yet I like the wark for all we've dam' few pickin's here—
No pension, an' the most we earn's four hunder' pound a year.
Better myself abroad? Maybe. *I'd* sooner starve than sail
Wi' such as call a snifter-rod *ross*. . . . French for nightingale.
Commeesion on my stores? Some do; but I can not afford
To lie like stewards wi' patty-pans. I'm older than the Board.
A bonus on the coal I save? Ou ay, the Scots are close,
But when I grudge the strength Ye gave I'll grudge their food to
those.

(There's bricks that I might recommend—an' clink the fire-bars cruel.
No! Welsh—Wangarti at the worst—an' damn all patent fuel!)
Inventions? Ye must stay in port to mak' a patent pay.

My Deferential Valve-Gear taught me how that business lay,
I blame no chaps wi' clearer head for aught they make or sell.
I found that I could not invent an' look to these—as well.
So, wrestled wi' Apollyon—Nah!—fretted like a bairn—
But burned the workin'-plans last run wi' all I hoped to earn.
Ye know how hard an Idol dies, an' what that meant to me—
E'en tak' it for a sacrifice acceptable to Thee. . . .

Below there! Oiler! What's your wark? Ye find her runnin' hard?

Ye needn't swill the cap wi' oil—this isn't the Cunard.

Ye thought? Ye are not paid to think. Go, sweat that off again!

Tck! Tck! It's deeficult to swear nor tak' The Name in vain!

Men, ay an' women, call me stern. Wi' these to oversee

Ye'll note I've little time to burn on social repartee.

The bairns see what their elders miss; they'll hunt me to an' fro,
Till for the sake of—well, a kiss—I tak' em down below.

That minds me of our Viscount loon—Sir Kenneth's kin—the chap
Wi' russia leather tennis-shoon an' spar-decked yachtin'-cap.

I showed him round last week, o'er all—an' at the last says he:
“Mister McAndrews, don't you think steam spoils romance at sea?”
Damned ijjit! I'd been doon that morn to see what ailed the throws,
Manholin', on my back—the cranks three inches from my nose.

McAndrew's Hymn

Romance! Those first-class passengers they like it very well,
Printed an' bound in little books; but why don't poets tell?
I'm sick of all their quirks an' turns—the loves an' doves they
dream—

Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o' Steam!
To match wi' Scotia's noblest speech yon orchestra sublime
Whaurto—uplifted like the Just—the tail-rods mark the time.
The crank-throws give the double-bass; the feed-pumps sobs an'
heaves:

An' now the main eccentrics start their quarrel on the sheaves.
Her time, her own appointed time, the rocking link-head bides,
Till—hear that note?—the rod's return whings glimmerin' through
the guides.

They're all awa! True beat, full power, the clangin' chorus goes
Clear to the tunnel where they sit, my purrin' dynamoes.

Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,
To work, Ye'll note, at any tilt an' every rate o' speed.
Fra skylight-lift to furnace-bars, backed, bolted, braced an' stayed,
An' singin' like the Mornin' Stars for joy that they are made;
While, out o' touch o' vanity, the sweatin' thrust-block says:
“Not unto us the praise, or man—not unto us the praise!”

Now, a'together, hear them lift their lesson—theirs an' mine:
“Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!”
Mill, forge an' try-pit taught them that when roarin' they arose,
An' whiles I wonder if a soul was gied them wi' the blows.
Oh for a man to weld it then, in one trip-hammer strain,
Till even first-class passengers could tell the meanin' plain!
But no one cares except mysel' that serve an' understand
My seven thousand horse-power here. Eh, Lord! They're grand—
they're grand!

Uplift am I? When first in store the new-made beasties stood,
Were Ye cast down that breathed the Word declarin' all things good?
Not so! O' that warld-liftin' joy no after-fall could vex,
Ye've left a glimmer still to cheer the Man—the Arrtifex!
That holds, in spite o' knock and scale, o' friction, waste an' slip,

William McFee

An' by that light—now, mark my word—we'll build the Perfect Ship.
I'll never last to judge her line or take her curve—not I.
But I ha' lived an' I ha' worked. All thanks to Thee, Most High!
An' I ha' done what I ha' done—judge Thou if ill or well—
Always Thy Grace preventin' me. . . . Losh! Yon's the "Stand by"
bell.

Pilot so soon? His flare it is. The mornin'-watch is set.

Well, God be thanked, as I was sayin', I'm no Pelagian yet.

Now I'll tak' on. . . .

'Morrn, Ferguson. Man, have ye ever thought

What your good leddy costs in coal? . . . I'll burn 'em down to port.

IRWIN EDMAN:

"I wish I had written

Normal Madness

from DIALOGUES IN LIMBO

by GEORGE SANTAYANA"

Dr. Edman, philosopher-essayist, can also turn his hand skillfully to the creation of light verse, book reviews and articles. As Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University his selection bears an added importance. Dr. Edman comments as follows: "I wish I had written this dialogue of Santayana's because it seems to me a twin masterpiece of both philosophical and literary art. It is a condensation of his whole philosophy of nature and life, transmuted into an extraordinarily moving and unified image. I think one could derive Santayana's complete philosophy from this single dialogue, and at the same time one could read this dialogue for its sheer dramatic beauty quite apart from any interest in the philosophy. There is hardly anything comparable to it since Plato."

Persons of the Dialogue:

The Shades of

DEMOCRITUS

ALCIBIADES

ARISTIPPUS THE CYRENIAC

DIONYSIUS THE YOUNGER, ONCE TYRANT OF SYRACUSE

And the Spirit of

A STRANGER STILL LIVING ON EARTH

Democritus. You reappear in season, inquisitive Pilgrim, and to-day you must take a seat beside me. These young men are compelling my hoary philosophy to disclose the cause of all the follies

From DIALOGUES IN LIMBO, by George Santayana, reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and Constable and Company, Ltd., publishers.

Irwin Edman

that they perpetrated when alive. They still wear, as you see, their youthful and lusty aspect; for when we enter these gates Minos and Rhadamanthus restore to each of us the semblance of that age at which his spirit on earth had been most vivid and masterful and least bent by tyrant circumstance out of its natural straightness. Therefore, Alcibiades and Dionysius and Aristippus walk here in the flower of their youth, and I sit crowned with all the snows and wisdom of extreme old age; because their souls, though essentially noble, grew daily more distracted in the press of the world and more polluted, but mine by understanding the world grew daily purer and stronger. They are still ready for every folly, though luckily they lack the means; and the chronicle of vanity remains full of interest for them, because they are confident of shining in it. Yet the person whom this subject most nearly touches is you, since you are still living, and life is at once the quintessence and the sum of madness. Here our spirits can be mad only vicariously and at the second remove, as the verses in which Sophocles expresses the ravings of Ajax are themselves sanely composed, and a calm image of horror. But your thoughts, in the confusion and welter of existence, are still rebellious to metre; you cannot yet rehearse your allotted part, as we do here, with the pause and pomp of a posthumous self-knowledge. My discourse on madness, therefore, will not only celebrate your actions, but may open your eyes; and I assign to you on this occasion the place of honour, as nearest of kin to the goddess Mania, who to-day presides over our games.

There is little philosophy not contained in the distinction between things as they exist in nature, and things as they appear to opinion; yet both the substance and its appearance often bear the same name, to the confusion of discourse. So it is with the word madness, which sometimes designates a habit of action, sometimes an illusion of the mind, and sometimes only the opprobrium which a censorious bystander may wish to cast upon either.

Moralists and ignorant philosophers like Socrates—of whom women and young men often think so highly—do not distinguish nature from convention, and because madness is inconvenient to so-

Normal Madness

ciety they call it contrary to nature. But nothing can be contrary to nature; and that a man should shriek or see wild visions or talk to the air, or to a guardian genius at his elbow, or should kill his children and himself, when the thing actually occurs, is not contrary to nature, but only to the habit of the majority. The diseases which destroy a man are no less natural than the instincts which preserve him. Nature has no difficulty in doing what she does, however wonderful or horrible it may seem to a fancy furnished only with a few loose images and incapable of tracing the currents of substance; and she has no hostility to what she leaves undone and no longing to do it. You will find her in a thousand ways unmaking what she makes, trying again where failure is certain, and neglecting the fine feats which she once easily accomplished, as if she had forgotten their secret. How simple it was once to be a Greek and ingenuously human; yet nature suffered that honest humanity to exist only for a few doubtful years. It peeped once into being, like a weed amid the crevices of those Aegean mountains, and all the revolving aeons will not bring it back. Nature is not love-sick; she will move on; and if to the eye of passion her works seem full of conflict, vanity, and horror, these are not horrors, vanities, or conflicts to her. She is no less willing that we should be mad than that we should be sane. The fly that prefers sweetness to a long life may drown in honey; nor is an agony of sweetness forbidden by nature to those inclined to sing or to love.

Moral terms are caresses or insults and describe nothing; but they have a meaning to the heart, and are not forbidden. You may, therefore, without scientific error, praise madness or deride it. Your own disposition and habit will dictate these judgements. A weak and delicate animal like man could have arisen only in an equable climate, in which at all seasons he might hunt and play, and run naked or gaily clad according to his pleasure: he therefore at first regards the Hyperborean regions, where summer and winter are sharply contrasted as cruel and uninhabitable; yet if by accident or necessity he becomes hardened to those changes, he begins to think his native forests pestiferous and fit only for snakes and monkeys. So it is also with the climates of the mind. Every nation thinks its own madness

Irwin Edman

normal and requisite; more passion and more fancy it calls folly, less it calls imbecility. Of course, according to nature, to possess no fancy and no passion is not to possess too little, and a stone is no imbecile; while to have limitless passion and fancy is not to have too much, and a drone among bees or a poet among men is not a fool for being all raptures. In the moralist aspiration is free to look either way. If some gymnosophist sincerely declares that to move or to breathe or to think is vanity, and that to become insensible is the highest good, in that it abolishes illusion and all other evils, to him I object nothing; if starkness is his treasure, let him preserve it. If on the other hand Orpheus or Pythagoras or Plato, having a noble contempt for the body, aspire to soar in a perpetual ecstasy, and if with their eyes fixed on heaven they welcome any accidental fall from a throne or from a housetop as a precious liberation of their spirits, fluttering to be free, again I oppose nothing to their satisfaction; let them hug Icarian madness to their bosoms, as being the acme of bliss and glory.

What, Aristippus and Dionysius, are you so soon asleep? I confidently expected you at this point to applaud my oration. But sleep on, if you prefer dreams to an understanding of dreams.

Perhaps you others, whose wits are awake, may ask me how, if in nature there be nothing but atoms in motion, madness comes to exist at all. I will not reply that motion and division are themselves insanity, although wise men have said so; for if division and motion are the deepest nature of things, insanity would be rather the vain wish to impose upon them unity and rest. For by sanity I understand assurance and peace in being what one is, and in becoming what one must become; so that the void and the atoms, unruffled and ever ready, are eminently sane. Not so, however, those closed systems which the atoms often form by their cyclical motion: these systems are automatic; they complete and repeat themselves by an inward virtue whenever circumstances permit; yet even when circumstances do not permit, they madly endeavour to do so. This mad endeavour, when only partially defeated, may restore and propagate itself with but slight variations, and it is then called life. Of life madness is an

Normal Madness

inseparable and sometimes a predominant part: every living body is mad in so far as it is inwardly disposed to permanence when things about it are unstable, or is inwardly disposed to change when, the circumstances being stable, there is no occasion for changing. That which is virtue in season is madness out of season, as when an old man makes love; and Prometheus or Alexander attempting incredible feats is a miracle of sanity, if he attempts them at the right moment.

So much for madness in action, inevitable whenever the impulses of bodies run counter to opportunity. But life, both in its virtue and in its folly, is also expressed in fancy, creating the world of appearance. In the eye of nature all appearance is vain and a mere dream, since it adds something to substance which substance is not; and it is no less idle to think what is true than to think what is false. If ever appearance should become ashamed of being so gratuitous and like an old gossip should seek to excuse its garrulity by alleging its truth, neither the void nor the atoms would heed that excuse or accept it. Are they, forsooth, insecure that they should call upon that sleepy witness to give testimony to their being? Their being is indomitable substance and motion and action, and to add thought, impalpable and ghostly, is to add madness. Indeed fancy as if aware of its vanity, makes holiday as long as it can; its joy is in fiction, and it would soon fade and grow weary if it had to tell the truth. The heroes in the *Iliad*, instead of doing a man's work in silence, like honest atoms, love to recite their past exploits and to threaten fresh deeds of blood: had they respected reality they would have been content to act, but they must prate and promise, because they live by imagination. If their boasts are lies, as is probable, they are all the more elated. These fools might almost have perceived their own idiocy, if they had merely described their true actions, saying, "I am standing on two legs; I am hurling a spear, I am running away, I am lying flat and dead on the ground." The truth, my friends, is not eloquent, except unspoken; its vast shadow lends eloquence to our sparks of thought as they die into it. After all there was some sense in that nonsense of Socrates about the sun and moon being governed by

Irwin Edman

reason, for they go their rounds soberly, without talking or thinking.

That the intoxication of life is the first cause of appearance you have all observed and experienced when you have danced in a chorus, or performed your military exercises, stamping on the ground in unison and striking your swords together; ordered motion being naturally fertile in sound, in flashing light, and in gladness. Such appearances, in the safe and liberal life of a god, would not be deceptive, since a god need not be concerned about his own existence, which is secure, or that of other things, which is indifferent, and he is not tempted to assert falsely, as men do, that sound and splendour and gladness are the substance of those things or of himself. In him the intoxication of life in creating appearance would not create illusion, but only an innocent and divine joy. Accordingly, when the voice of a god traverses the air, the burden of it is neither true nor false; only the priest or the people, anxiously interpreting that oracle according to their fears and necessities, render false or true by their presumption such scraps of it as they may hear. The god, however, was not mindful of them but was singing to himself his own song. This divine simplicity of nature is ill understood by mortals, who address everything to their mean uses and vain advantage; whereby in the struggle to lengthen their days a little they fill them with distraction.

This is a third and most virulent form of madness, in which the dreams of the vegetative soul are turned into animal error and animal fury. For animals cannot wait for the slow ministrations of earth and air, but as you see in birds and kittens and young children, must be in a fidget to move; prying in all directions and touching and gobbling everything within reach. This is their only entertainment, for they have lost all fine inner sensibility, and their feelings and fancies arise only when their whole soul is addressed to external things of which they are necessarily ignorant—for what can a simpleton know of the streams of atoms actually coursing about him? His mind is furnished only with feelings and images generated within, but being distracted by the urgency of his lusts and fears, he takes those images and feelings for pleasant lures or fantastic and

Normal Madness

stalking enemies. Thus whereas locomotion by itself would be unconscious and fancy by itself would be innocent and free from error, fancy married with locomotion, as it must be in the strife of animals, begets false opinion and wraps the naked atoms in a veil of dreams.

Such is the origin of opinion; and as the chief endeavour of the animal body is to defend and propagate itself at all costs, so the chief and most lasting illusion of the mind is the illusion of its own importance. What madness to assert that one collocation of atoms or one conjunction of feelings is right or is better, and another is wrong or is worse! Yet this baseless opinion every living organism emits in its madness, contradicting the equal madness of all its rivals. They say the stars laugh at us for this, but what is their own case? The sun and the planets may seem to gaping observation to lead a sane life, having found paths of safety; yet to the sharp eye of science the ambush is visible into which they glide. If they think themselves immortal gods, and feast and laugh together as they revolve complacently, they are mad, because a sudden surprise awaits them, and the common doom. Had they been wise, like the philosophers who know themselves mortal, they should have consented and made ready to die, seeing that they are not pure atoms or the pure void, and that in forming them nature was not in earnest but playing. They would have done well to laugh, if they had laughed at themselves; for those who will not laugh with nature in her mockery and playfulness, turn her sport first into delusion and then into anguish.

Such being the nature and causes of madness, is there no remedy for it? In answering this question I broach the second and kindlier part of my discourse, when having described the disease I bring hope of health and prescribe the cure. A radical cure, though it exists, I will not propose to you, for you are young and inquisitive and not ready to renounce all life and all knowledge. Only some great and heroic sage can begin by disowning madness altogether and felling the tree of opinion at the root; nor would he, by leaping into total salvation, attain to any understanding of his former distress. In abolishing illusion he would have forgotten its existence and virtually denied it; so that for the blatant errors of his lusty years he would

Irwin Edman

have substituted one great mute and perpetual error: the total ignorance which besets the atoms regarding the patterns and the dreams which in fact they generate. Suddenly to renounce all madness is accordingly to miss the truth about madness, together with the whole comic rout of this world, which is marvellously fertile in comedy.

My physic accordingly will be more gentle; I will not prescribe instant death as the only medicine. Wisdom is an evanescent madness, when the dream still continues but no longer deceives. In all illusions there is some truth since being products of nature they all have some relation to nature, and a prudent mind by lifting their masks may discover their true occasions. Doubtless the number and swiftness of the atoms, even in a little space, must always elude human discernment; but the more foolish images of sense may be disallowed in favour of others more faithful to the true rhythms and divisions of nature. Thus to the innocent eye the six stout spokes of a chariot-wheel revolving rapidly are merged and blurred in one whirling disc; but the philosopher though no less subject than other men to this illusion, on seeing the disc will remember the spokes, and in all his fevers and griefs will be mindful of the atoms; his forced illusions will not deceive him altogether, since he knows their cause, and it is in his power, if the worst befall, by a draught of atoms artfully mingled, to dispel all his griefs and fevers for ever. Meantime, in the interests of human life, without inquiring into its ultimate vanity, a conventional distinction may be drawn between madness and sanity. Belief in the imaginary and desire for the impossible will justly be called madness; but those habits and ideas will be conventionally called sane which are sanctioned by tradition and which, when followed, do not lead directly to the destruction of oneself or of one's country. Such conventional sanity is a normal madness like that of images in sense, love in youth, and religion among nations.

Two protecting deities, indeed like two sober friends supporting a drunkard, flank human folly and keep it within bounds. One of these deities is Punishment, and the other Agreement. The very mad man chokes, starves, runs into the sea, or having committed some fearful rape or murder is sentenced to death by the magistrate. Even

Normal Madness

if harmless, he is tied with a chain, and dies like a dog in his kennel. Punishment thus daily removes the maddest from the midst of mankind. The remnant, though their thoughts be in their homely way still dull or fantastic, then plod on in relative safety, while the unhappy souls whom Punishment has overtaken rest from their troubles. For no sooner has the system of atoms forming an animal body lost its equilibrium and been dispersed in death, than no pain or fancy or haggard hope subsists in that system any longer, and the peace of indifference and justice returns to the world; and if here or in the memory of men some echo of that life reverberates, it rings without anguish, the note once sounded repeating itself perpetually, pure and undisturbed. This is the good work which Punishment does daily, healing and harmonizing the worst of follies.

Yet before dying in the arms of Punishment madness may be mitigated and tamed by Agreement, like a young colt broken in and trained to gallop in harness. The automatism of life, which is necessarily spontaneous and blind, may by adjustment with its occasions become a principle of health and genius, the parent of noble actions and beautiful works. Fancy, too, in creating images which have no originals in nature—since in nature there is nothing but atoms and the void—may by union with the times and order of natural events become the mother of names, pleasant and familiar, by which those events are called in the language of sense. Thus the most diverse imaginations in various species of animals may be rendered compatible with sagacity and with a prosperous life. Migratory fowl do not record their voyages in books, like human geographers, yet they have appointed dreams and secret sensations which warn them of the season for flight, and they are well informed about Egypt without consulting Herodotus. If omens were observed scientifically and not superstitiously interpreted, augury might be a true art of substitution, like language. There are many false tales told both by Greeks and barbarians which at times are useful to the state, because by an artful disposition of signs and sounds they dispose the inner parts of men favourably for breasting labour or war. Thus the most deed-dyed illusion, if it be interwoven with good habits, may flourish in

Irwin Edman

long amity with things, naming and saluting them, as we do the stars, or the gods, without understanding their nature.

Such amity can the god Agreement establish even between aliens, but between brothers he weaves a subtler and a sweeter bond. For when kindred bodies have the same habitat and the same arts they also have the same illusions; and their common madness gives to each a perfect knowledge of the other's mind. Whereas the images in the eye or the thoughts of the heart can agree but loosely and, as it were, politically with material things, they may agree exactly with the images in another eye, and the thoughts of another heart. This free unanimity was called friendship by the Greeks, who alone of all nations have understood the nature of friendship. Barbarians of course may fight faithfully in bands, and may live in tribes and in cities, hugging their wives and children to their bosom; but such instinctive love, which all animals manifest, is not friendship. It moves in the realm of nature, and concerns only action and fate, whereas friendship is agreement in madness, when the same free thoughts and the same fraternal joys visit two kindred spirits. It was not for fighting loyally side by side that the Spartan phalanx or the Theban band were incomparable in the annals of war, but for fighting side by side for the sake of the beautiful, and in order that the liberal madness of their friendship might not end, unless it ended in death. All the glories of Greece are the fruits of this friendship and belong to the realm of madness tempered by Agreement; for out of the very fountain of madness Apollo and the Muses drew that intoxication which they taught to flow in the paths of health and of harmony. The Greeks in the intervals between their wars, instead of sinking into luxury and sloth, or into a vain industry, instituted games, in which peace was made keen and glorious by a beautiful image of war. Actual war is a conflict of matter with matter, as blind as it is inevitable; but the images which it breeds survive in peace, as we survive in these removed spaces after the battle of existence. So even the wisest when alive play with images and interests, and the glitter of many rival opinions hides the deep harmony with nature by which these opinions live. There is sweetness and quaint reason in these frail

Normal Madness

thoughts of our after-life, as in the wisdom of children. What could be madder than a ghost? Yet by the harmony which each of us has long since attained with himself, and by the freedom and peace which we gladly grant to one another, we immortalize the life of friendship and share it with the gods.

Let such, then, be my discourse upon madness. Philosophers are unjust to the madness of the vulgar, and the vulgar to that of madmen and philosophers, not seeing how plausible a substitute it is for their own, because everybody thinks himself sane; wherein precisely shine his blinding illusion. I have wished in a manner to remove the mystery and odium from this universal predicament of mortals, and to show it to be no anomaly. Madness is natural and, like all things natural, it loves itself, and often, by its innocence or by its signification, it lives in harmony with the rest of nature; otherwise, by the action it comports, it finds its quietus in punishment and death.

Alcibiades. Your discourse, indomitable Sage, has filled us all with wonder, and left us without the wish to speak. The Stranger, if he had dared, should have broken this silence rather than I, for you tell us that madness comes of being alive, and very likely he thinks that such an opinion comes of being dead.

Democritus. Very likely, but let him speak for himself.

The Stranger. I should not hesitate to do so if I had anything to object to so persuasive a discourse, but words on my part are superfluous since I recognize the truth of every part of it. To show you, however, that the living are not always unwilling to confess their plight, I will repeat an old story of the sort which we compose for children. It seems curiously to confirm all that the noble Democritus has taught us.

Once upon a time, so the story runs, the whole world was a garden in which the tender fair-haired child, whose name was Autologos, played and babbled alone. There was, indeed, an old woman who tended the garden, a goddess in disguise; but she lived in a cave and came out only at night when the child was asleep, for like the bat and the astronomer she could see better in the dark. She had a sharp pruning-hook on a very long pole, with which she silently pruned

Irwin Edman

every tree and shrub in the garden, even the highest branches, cutting off the dead twigs and shaking down the yellow leaves in showers; and often, muttering surly words to herself which were not intelligible, she would cut off some flower or some bud as well, so that when the child awoke he missed them and could not imagine what had become of them. Now the child in his play gave names to everything that he liked or disliked; and the rose he called Beauty, and the jasmin Pleasure, and the hyacinth Sweetness, and the violet Sadness, and the thistle Pain, and the olive Merit, and the laurel Triumph, and the vine Inspiration. He was highly pleased with all these names, and they made those flowers and plants so much more interesting to him, that he thought those names were their souls. But one day, having pricked himself with the thorns of a rose, he changed her name to Love; and this caused him to wonder why he had given those particular names to everything rather than quite different names; and the child began to feel older. As he sat brooding on this question, for he had stopped playing, a man in a black gown came into the garden who was a botanist, and said: "It matters little what names you give to flowers because they already have scientific names which indicate their true genera and species; the rose is only a rose, and is neither Beauty nor Love; and so with all the other flowers. They are flowers and plants merely, and they have no souls." Hearing this the child began to cry, very much to the botanist's annoyance, for being a busy man he disliked emotion. "After all," he added, "those names of yours will do no harm, and you may go on using them if you please; for they are prettier than those which truly describe the flowers, and much shorter; and if the word soul is particularly precious to you, you may even say that plants and flowers have souls; only, if you wish to be a man and not always a child, you must understand that the soul of each flower is only a name for its way of life, indicating how it spreads its petals in the morning and perhaps closes them at night, as you do your eyes. You must never suppose, because the flower has a soul, that this soul does anything but what you find the flower actually doing." But the child was not comforted, and when the wind had dried his tears, he answered: "If

Normal Madness

I cannot give beautiful names to the plants and flowers which shall be really their souls, and if I cannot tell myself true tales about them, I will not play in the garden any more. You may have it all to yourself and botanize in it, but I hate you.” And the child went to sleep that night quite flushed and angry. Then, as silently as the creeping moonlight, the old woman came out of her cave and went directly to the place where the child was sleeping, and with a great stroke of her pruning-knife cut off his head; and she took him into her cave and buried him under the leaves which had fallen on that same night, which were many. When the botanist returned in the morning and found the child gone he was much perplexed. “To whom,” said he to himself, “shall I now teach botany? There is nobody now to care for flowers, for I am only a professor, and if I can’t teach anybody the right names for flowers, of what use are flowers to me?” This thought oppressed the poor man so much that he entirely collapsed, and as he was rather wizened to begin with, he was soon reduced to a few stiff tendons and bones, like the ribs of a dry leaf; and even these shreds soon crumbled, and he evaporated altogether. Only his black gown remained to delight the ragpicker. But the goddess in guise of that old woman went on pruning the garden, and it seemed to make no difference in her habits that the child and the botanist were dead.

I think we may surmise that the true name of this goddess must have been Dikè, the same that the wise Democritus was calling Punishment; and the botanist’s name must have been Nomos, whom he was calling Agreement; and of course the child Autologos was that innocent illusion which was the theme of his whole discourse.

Aristippus. If this be the nature of madness, I propose that we immediately raise an altar to that deity, and worship him hereafter as the only beneficent god; and in order to avoid the protests of the vulgar, who think madness an evil, we will disguise our deity under the name of Autologos, borrowed from the Stranger’s tale; and will not identify him with the Furies or Harpies, but with Pan, Apollo, Orpheus, and Dionysus.

Dionysius. Agreed: and since my name is derived from that of

Irwin Edman

Dionysus, who must have been my ancestor, I proclaim myself high priest of the new temple.

Democritus. You pay my speech a great tribute. I have celebrated the mad god so fitly that I have filled his votaries with a new frenzy of worship.

Alcibiades. Aristippus and Dionysius are enemies of science, and you, Democritus, are a believer in it. Being no judge in the matter, I will not pronounce between you, but I can conceive that a man who has spent his whole long life distilling herbs and grinding stones into powder should believe that he knows something of their substance. Nevertheless, intense study, too, is hypnotic, and might not the lucid theory of nature which you think partly awakens you out of the dream of life, be but a dream within a dream and the deepest of your illusions? My whole career seems a myth to me now in memory; yet when I interpret it in terms of your philosophy and imagine instead nothing but clouds of atoms drifting through a black sky, I seem to be descending into an even deeper cavern of reverie. Suppose I was dreaming of a chariot-race, hearing the shouting crowds, blushing to be myself the victor, and reining in my quivering steeds to receive the crown, and suppose that suddenly my dream was transformed, and Olympia and the sunshine and myself and my horses and my joy and the praises of the Athenians turned to atoms fatally combined—I am afraid that, like the child in the Stranger's tale, I should burst into tears at that change of dreams.

Democritus. Do you think I should blame you? Is the sublimity of truth impatient of error? I know well the shock that comes to innocence on discovering that the beautiful is unsubstantial. The soul, too, has her virginity and must bleed a little before bearing fruit. You misconceive my philosophy if you suppose that I deny the beautiful or would madly forbid it to appear. Has not my whole discourse been an apology for illusion and a proof of its necessity? When I discover that the substance of the beautiful is a certain rhythm and harmony in motion, as the atoms dance in circles through the void (and what else should the substance of the beautiful be if it has a substance at all?) far from destroying the beautiful in the realm of appearance

Normal Madness

my discovery raises its presence there to a double dignity; for its witchery, being a magic birth, is witchery indeed; and in its parent nature, whose joy it is, proves her fertility. I deny nothing. Your Olympian victory and your trembling steeds, spattered with foam, and your strong lithe hand detaining them before the altar of Apollo, while you receive the crown—how should science delete these verses from the book of experience or prove that they were never sung? But where is their music now? What was it when passing? A waking dream. Yes, and grief also is a dream, which if it leaves a trace leaves not one of its own quality, but a transmuted and serene image of sorrow in this realm of memory and truth. As the grief of Priam in Homer and the grief of Achilles, springing from the dreadful madness of love and pride in their two bosoms, united in the divine ecstasy of the poet, so all the joys and griefs of illusion, unite and become a strange ecstasy in a sane mind. What would you ask of philosophy? To feed you on sweets and lull you in your errors in the hope that death may overtake you before you understand anything? Ah, wisdom is sharper than death and only the brave can love her. When in the thick of passion the veil suddenly falls, it leaves us bereft of all we thought ours, smitten and consecrated to an unearthly revelation, walking dead among the living, not knowing what we seem to know, not loving what we seem to love, but already translated into an invisible paradise where none of these things are, but one only companion, smiling and silent, who by day and night stands beside us and shakes his head gently, bidding us say Nay, nay, to all our madness. Did you think, because I would not spare you, that I never felt the cold steel? Has not my own heart been pierced? Shed your tears, my son, shed your tears. The young man who has not wept is a savage, and the old man who will not laugh is a fool.

RICHARD WRIGHT:

"I wish I had written

Early Days of a Woman

from MELANCTHA

by GERTRUDE STEIN"

*Mr. Wright, the brilliant novelist whose *Bigger* is unforgettable to millions, is known particularly for *NATIVE SON*, *BLACK BOY*, and *UNCLE TOM'S CHILDREN*. Mr. Wright has chosen this picture of a few years in the life of a girl on the verge of womanhood because "this story was the first realistic treatment of Negro life I'd seen when I was trying to learn how to write, and from my first reading of the story I wished I had written it and I still do. For clarity, for the conveying of emotion, it is a miracle. As I've said in another place, this story made me see and accept for the first time in my life the speech of Negroes, speech that fell all around me unheard."*

ROSE JOHNSON made it very hard to bring her baby to its birth. Melanctha Herbert who was Rose Johnson's friend, did everything that any woman could. She tended Rose, and she was patient, submissive, soothing, and untiring, while the sullen, childish, cowardly, black Rosie grumbled and fussed and howled and made herself to be an abomination and like a simple beast.

The child though it was healthy after it was born, did not live long. Rose Johnson was careless and negligent and selfish, and when Melanctha had to leave for a few days, the baby died. Rose Johnson had liked the baby well enough and perhaps she just forgot it for a while, anyway the child was dead and Rose and Sam her husband

From "Melanctha" in the book titled THREE LIVES. Copyright, 1909, by Gertrude Stein. Copyright, 1933, by The Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

Early Days of a Woman

were very sorry but then these things came so often in the negro world in Bridgepoint, that they neither of them thought about it very long.

Rose Johnson and Melanctha Herbert had been friends now for some years. Rose had lately married Sam Johnson a decent honest kindly fellow, a deck hand on a coasting steamer.

Melanctha Herbert had not yet been really married.

Rose Johnson was a real black, tall, well built, sullen, stupid, child-like, good looking negress. She laughed when she was happy and grumbled and was sullen with everything that troubled.

Rose Johnson was a real black negress but she had been brought up quite like their own child by white folks.

Rose laughed when she was happy but she had not the wide, abandoned laughter that makes the warm broad glow of negro sunshine. Rose was never joyous with the earth-born, boundless joy of negroes. Hers was just ordinary, any sort of woman laughter.

Rose Johnson was careless and was lazy, but she had been brought up by white folks and she needed decent comfort. Her white training had only made for habits, not for nature. Rose had the simple, promiscuous unmorality of the black people.

Rose Johnson and Melanctha Herbert like many of the twos with women were a curious pair to be such friends.

Melanctha Herbert was a graceful, pale yellow, intelligent, attractive negress. She had not been raised like Rose by white folks but then she had been half made with real white blood.

She and Rose Johnson were both of the better sort of negroes, there, in Bridgepoint.

"No, I ain't no common nigger," said Rose Johnson, "for I was raised by white folks, and Melanctha she is so bright and learned so much in school, she ain't no common nigger either, though she ain't got no husband to be married to like I am to Sam Johnson."

Why did the subtle, intelligent, attractive, half white girl Melanctha Herbert love and do for and demean herself in service to this coarse, decent, sullen, ordinary, black childish Rose, and why was this unmoral, promiscuous, shiftless Rose married, and that's not

Richard Wright

so common either, to a good man of the negroes, while Melanctha with her white blood and attraction and her desire for a right position had not yet been really married.

Sometimes the thought of how all her world was made, filled the complex, desiring Melanctha with despair. She wondered, often, how she could go on living when she was so blue.

Melanctha told Rose one day how a woman whom she knew had killed herself because she was so blue. Melanctha said, sometimes, she thought this was the best thing for her herself to do.

Rose Johnson did not see it the least bit that way.

"I don't see Melanctha why you should talk like you would kill yourself just because you're blue. I'd never kill myself Melanctha just 'cause I was blue. I'd maybe kill somebody else Melanctha 'cause I was blue, but I'd never kill myself. If I ever killed myself Melanctha it'd be by accident, and if I ever killed myself by accident Melanctha, I'd be awful sorry."

Rose Johnson and Melanctha Herbert had first met, one night, at church. Rose Johnson did not care much for religion. She had not enough emotion to be really roused by a revival. Melanctha Herbert had not come yet to know how to use religion. She was still too complex with desire. However, the two of them in negro fashion went very often to the negro church, along with all their friends, and they slowly came to know each other very well.

Rose Johnson had been raised not as a servant but quite like their own child by white folks. Her mother who had died when Rose was still a baby, had been a trusted servant in the family. Rose was a cute, attractive, good looking little black girl and these people had no children of their own and so they kept Rose in their house.

As Rose grew older she drifted from her white folks back to the colored people, and she gradually no longer lived in the old house. Then it happened that these people went away to some other town to live, and somehow Rose stayed behind in Bridgpoint. Her white folks left a little money to take care of Rose, and this money she got every little while.

Rose now in the easy fashion of the poor lived with one woman

Early Days of a Woman

in her house, and then for no reason went and lived with some other woman in her house. All this time, too, Rose kept company, and was engaged, first to this colored man and then to that, and always she made sure she was engaged for Rose had strong the sense of proper conduct.

"No, I ain't no common nigger just to go around with any man, nor you Melanctha shouldn't neither," she said one day when she was telling the complex and less sure Melanctha what was the right way for her to do. "No Melanctha, I ain't no common nigger to do so, for I was raised by white folks. You know very well Melanctha that I've always been engaged to them."

And so Rose lived on, always comfortable and rather decent and very lazy and very well content.

After she had lived some time this way, Rose thought it would be nice and very good in her position to get regularly really married. She had lately met Sam Johnson somewhere, and she liked him and she knew he was a good man, and then he had a place where he worked every day and got good wages. Sam Johnson liked Rose very well and he was quite ready to be married. One day they had a grand real wedding and were married. Then with Melanctha Herbert's help to do the sewing and the nicer work, they furnished comfortably a little red brick house. Sam then went back to his work as deck hand on a coasting steamer, and Rose stayed home in her house and sat and bragged to all her friends how nice it was to be married really to a husband.

Life went on very smoothly with them all the year. Rose was lazy but not dirty and Sam was careful but not fussy, and then there was Melanctha to come in every day and help to keep things neat.

When Rose's baby was coming to be born, Rose came to stay in the house where Melanctha Herbert lived just then, with a big good natured colored woman who did washing.

Rose went there to stay, so that she might have the doctor from the hospital near by to help her have the baby, and then, too, Melanctha could attend to her while she was sick.

Richard Wright

Here the baby was born, and here it died, and then Rose went back to her house again with Sam.

Melanctha Herbert had not made her life all simple like Rose Johnson. Melanctha had not found it easy with herself to make her wants and what she had, agree.

Melanctha Herbert was always losing what she had in wanting all the things she saw. Melanctha was always being left when she was not leaving others.

Melanctha Herbert always loved too hard and much too often. She was always full with mystery and subtle movements and denials and vague distrusts and complicated disillusionments. Then Melanctha would be sudden and impulsive and unbounded in some faith, and then she would suffer and be strong in her repression.

Melanctha Herbert was always seeking rest and quiet, and always she could only find new ways to be in trouble.

Melanctha wondered often how it was she did not kill herself when she was so blue. Often she thought this would be really the best way for her to do.

Melanctha Herbert had been raised to be religious, by her mother. Melanctha had not liked her mother very well. This mother, 'Mis' Herbert, as her neighbors called her, had been a sweet-appearing and dignified and pleasant, pale yellow, colored woman. 'Mis' Herbert had always been a little wandering and mysterious and uncertain in her ways.

Melanctha was pale yellow and mysterious and a little pleasant like her mother, but the real power in Melanctha's nature came through her robust and unpleasant and very unendurable black father.

Melanctha's father only used to come to where Melanctha and her mother lived, once in a while.

It was many years now that Melanctha had not heard or seen or known of anything her father did.

Melanctha Herbert almost always hated her black father, but she loved very well the power in herself that came through him. And so her feeling was really closer to her black coarse father, than her

Early Days of a Woman

feeling had ever been toward her pale yellow, sweet-appearing mother. The things she had in her of her mother never made her feel respect.

Melancta Herbert had not loved herself in childhood. All of her youth was bitter to remember.

Melancta had not loved her father and her mother and they had found it very troublesome to have her.

Melancta's mother and her father had been regularly married. Melancta's father was a big black virile negro. He only came once in a while to where Melancta and her mother lived, but always that pleasant, sweet-appearing, pale yellow woman, mysterious and uncertain and wandering in her ways, was close in sympathy and thinking to her big black virile husband.

James Herbert was a common, decent enough, colored workman, brutal and rough to his one daughter, but then she was a most disturbing child to manage.

The young Melancta did not love her father and her mother, and she had a breakneck courage, and a tongue that could be very nasty. Then, too, Melancta went to school and was very quick in all the learning, and she knew very well how to use this knowledge to annoy her parents who knew nothing.

Melancta Herbert had always had a breakneck courage. Melancta always loved to be with horses; she loved to do wild things, to ride the horses and to break and tame them.

Melancta, when she was a little girl, had had a good chance to live with horses. Near where Melancta and her mother lived was the stable of the Bishops, a rich family who always had fine horses.

John, the Bishops' coachman, liked Melancta very well and he always let her do anything she wanted with the horses. John was a decent, vigorous mulatto with a prosperous house and wife and children. Melancta was older than any of his children. She was now a well grown girl of twelve and just beginning as a woman.

James Herbert, Melancta's father, knew this John, the Bishops' coachman very well.

Richard Wright

One day James Herbert came to where his wife and daughter lived, and he was furious.

"Where's that Melanctha girl of yours," he said fiercely, "if she is to the Bishops' stables again, with that man John, I swear I kill her. Why don't you see to that girl better you, you're her mother."

James Herbert was a powerful, loose built, hard handed, black, angry negro. Herbert never was a joyous negro. Even when he drank with other men, and he did that very often, he was never really joyous. In the days when he had been most young and free and open, he had never had the wide abandoned laughter that gives the broad glow to negro sunshine.

His daughter, Melanctha Herbert, later always made a hard forced laughter. She was only strong and sweet and in her nature when she was really deep in trouble, when she was fighting so with all she really had, that she did not use her laughter. This was always true of poor Melanctha who was so certain that she hated trouble. Melanctha Herbert was always seeking peace and quiet, and she could always only find new ways to get excited.

James Herbert was often a very angry negro. He was fierce and serious, and he was very certain that he often had good reason to be angry with Melanctha, who knew so well how to be nasty, and to use her learning with a father who knew nothing.

James Herbert often drank with John, the Bishops' coachman. John in his good nature sometimes tried to soften Herbert's feeling toward Melanctha. Not that Melanctha ever complained to John of her home life or her father. It was never Melanctha's way, even in the midst of her worst trouble to complain to any one of what happened to her, but nevertheless somehow every one who knew Melanctha always knew how much she suffered. It was only while one really loved Melanctha that one understood how to forgive her, that she never once complained nor looked unhappy, and was always handsome and in spirits, and yet one always knew how much she suffered.

The father, James Herbert, never told his troubles either, and he was so fierce and serious that no one ever thought of asking.

Early Days of a Woman

'Mis' Herbert as her neighbors called her was never heard even to speak of her husband or her daughter. She was always pleasant, sweet-appearing, mysterious and uncertain, and a little wandering in her ways.

The Herberts were a silent family with their troubles, but somehow every one who knew them always knew everything that happened.

The morning of one day when in the evening Herbert and the coachman John were to meet to drink together, Melanctha had to come to the stable joyous and in the very best of humors. Her good friend John on this morning felt very firmly how good and sweet she was and how very much she suffered.

John was a very decent colored coachman. When he thought about Melanctha it was as if she were the eldest of his children. Really he felt very strongly the power in her of a woman. John's wife always liked Melanctha and she always did all she could to make things pleasant. And Melanctha all her life loved and respected kind and good and considerate people. Melanctha always loved and wanted peace and gentleness and goodness and all her life for herself poor Melanctha could only find new ways to be in trouble.

This evening after John and Herbert had drunk awhile together, the good John began to tell the father what a fine girl he had for a daughter. Perhaps the good John had been drinking a good deal of liquor, perhaps there was a gleam of something softer than the feeling of a friendly elder in the way John then spoke of Melanctha. There had been a good deal of drinking and John certainly that very morning had felt strongly Melanctha's power as a woman. James Herbert was always a fierce, suspicious, serious negro, and drinking never made him feel more open. He looked very black and evil as he sat and listened while John grew more and more admiring as he talked half to himself, half to the father, of the virtues and the sweetness of Melanctha.

Suddenly between them there came a moment filled full with strong black curses, and then sharp razors flashed in the black hands,

Richard Wright

that held them flung backward in the negro fashion, and then for some minutes there was fierce slashing.

John was a decent, pleasant, good natured, light brown negro, but he knew how to use a razor to do bloody slashing.

When the two men were pulled apart by the other negroes who were in the room drinking, John had not been much wounded but James Herbert had gotten one good strong cut that went from his right shoulder down across the front of his whole body. Razor fighting does not wound very deeply, but it makes a cut that looks most nasty, for it is so very bloody.

Herbert was held by the other negroes until he was cleaned and plastered, and then he was put to bed to sleep off his drink and fighting.

The next day he came to where his wife and daughter lived and he was furious.

"Where's that Melanctha, of yours?" he said to his wife, when he saw her. "If she is to the Bishops' stables now with that yellow John, I swear I kill her. A nice way she is going for a decent daughter. Why don't you see to that girl better you, ain't you her mother!"

Melanctha Herbert had always been old in all her ways and she knew very early how to use her power as a woman, and yet Melanctha with all her inborn intense wisdom was really very ignorant of evil. Melanctha had not yet come to understand what they meant, the things she so often heard around her, and which were just beginning to stir strongly in her.

Now when her father began fiercely to assail her, she did not really know what it was that he was so furious to force from her. In every way that he could think of in his anger, he tried to make her say a thing she did not really know. She held out and never answered anything he asked her, for Melanctha had a breakneck courage and she just then badly hated her black father.

When the excitement was all over, Melanctha began to know her power, the power she had so often felt stirring within her and which she now knew she could use to make her stronger.

James Herbert did not win this fight with his daughter. After

Early Days of a Woman

awhile he forgot it as he soon forgot John and the cut of his sharp razor.

Melanctha almost forgot to hate her father, in her strong interest in the power she now knew she had within her.

Melanctha did not care much now, any longer, to see John or his wife or even the fine horses. This life was too quiet and accustomed and no longer stirred her to any interest or excitement.

Melanctha now really was beginning as a woman. She was ready, and she began to search in the streets and in dark corners to discover men and to learn their natures and their various ways of working.

In these next years Melanctha learned many ways that lead to wisdom. She learned the ways, and dimly in the distance she saw wisdom. These years of learning led very straight to trouble for Melanctha, though in these years Melanctha never did or meant anything that was really wrong.

Girls who are brought up with care and watching can always find moments to escape into the world, where they may learn the ways that lead to wisdom. For a girl raised like Melanctha Herbert, such escape was always very simple. Often she was alone, sometimes she was with a fellow seeker, and she strayed and stood, sometimes by railroad yards, sometimes on the docks or around new buildings where many men were working. Then when the darkness covered everything all over, she would begin to learn this man or that. She would advance, they would respond, and then she would withdraw a little, dimly, and always she did not know what it was that really held her. Sometimes she would almost go over, and then the strength in her of not really knowing, would stop the average man in his endeavor. It was a strange experience of ignorance and power and desire. Melanctha did not know what it was that she so badly wanted. She was afraid, and yet she did not understand that here she really was a coward.

Boys had never meant much to Melanctha. They had always been too young to content her. Melanctha had a strong respect for any kind of successful power. It was this that always kept Melanctha nearer, in her feeling toward her virile and unendurable black father,

Richard Wright

than she ever was in her feelings for her pale yellow, sweet-appearing mother. The things she had in her of her mother, never made her feel respect.

In these young days, it was only men that for Melanctha held anything there was of knowledge and power. It was not from men however that Melanctha learned to really understand this power.

From the time that Melanctha was twelve until she was sixteen she wandered, always seeking but never more than very dimly seeing wisdom. All this time Melanctha went on with her school learning; she went to school rather longer than do most of the colored children.

Melanctha's wanderings after wisdom she always had to do in secret and by snatches, for her mother was then still living and 'Mis' Herbert always did some watching, and Melanctha with all her hard courage dreaded that there should be much telling to her father, who came now quite often to where Melanctha lived with her mother.

In these days Melanctha talked and stood and walked with many kinds of men, but she did not learn to know any of them very deeply. They all supposed her to have world knowledge and experience. They, believing that she knew all, told her nothing, and thinking that she was deciding with them, asked for nothing, and so though Melanctha wandered widely, she was really very safe with all the wandering.

It was a very wonderful experience this safety of Melanctha in these days of her attempted learning. Melanctha herself did not feel the wonder, she only knew that for her it all had no real value.

Melanctha all her life was very keen in her sense for real experience. She knew she was not getting what she so badly wanted, but with all her breakneck courage Melanctha here was a coward, and so she could not learn to really understand.

Melanctha liked to wander, and to stand by the railroad yard, and watch the men and the engines and the switches and everything that was busy there, working. Railroad yards are a ceaseless fascination. They satisfy every kind of nature. For the lazy man whose blood flows very slowly, it is a steady soothing world of motion which sup-

Early Days of a Woman

plies him with the sense of a strong moving power. He need not work and yet he has it very deeply; he has it even better than the man who works in it or owns it. Then for natures that like to feel emotion without the trouble of having any suffering, it is very nice to get the swelling in the throat, and the fullness, and the heart beats, and all the flutter of excitement that comes as one watches the people come and go, and hears the engine pound and give a long drawn whistle. For a child watching through a hole in the fence above the yard, it is a wonder world of mystery and movement. The child loves all the noise, and then it loves the silence of the wind that comes before the full rush of the pounding train, that bursts out from the tunnel where it lost itself and all its noise in darkness, and the child loves all the smoke, that sometimes comes in rings, and always puffs with fire and blue color.

For Melanctha the yard was full of the excitement of many many men, and perhaps a free and whirling future.

Melanctha came here very often and watched the men and all the things that were so busy working. The men always had time for, "Hullo sis, do you want to sit on my engine," and, "Hullo, that's a pretty lookin' yaller girl, do you want to come and see him cookin'."

All the colored porters liked Melanctha. They often told her exciting things that had happened; how in the West they went through big tunnels where there was no air to breathe, and then out and winding around edges of great canyons on thin high spindling trestles, and sometimes cars, and sometimes whole trains fell from the narrow bridges, and always up from the dark places death and all kinds of queer devils looked up and laughed in their faces. And then they would tell how sometimes when the train went pounding down steep slippery mountains, great rocks would racket and roll down around them, and sometimes would smash in the car and kill men; and as the porters told these stories their round, black, shining faces would grow solemn, and their color would go grey beneath the greasy black, and their eyes would roll white in the fear and wonder of the things they could scare themselves by telling.

There was one, big, serious, melancholy, light brown porter who

Richard Wright

often told Melanctha stories, for he liked the way she had of listening with intelligence and sympathetic feeling, when he told how the white men in the far South tried to kill him because he made one of them who was drunk and called him a damn nigger, and who refused to pay money for his chair to a nigger, get off the train between stations. And then this porter had to give up going to that part of the Southern country, for all the white men swore that if he ever came there again they would surely kill him.

Melanctha liked this serious, melancholy, light brown negro very well, and all her life Melanctha wanted and respected gentleness and goodness, and this man always gave her good advice and serious kindness, and Melanctha felt such things very deeply, but she could never let them help her or affect her to change the ways that always made her keep herself in trouble.

Melanctha spent many of the last hours of the daylight with the porters and with other men who worked hard, but when the darkness came it was always different. Then Melanctha would find herself with the, for her, gentlemanly classes. A clerk, or a young express agent would begin to know her, and they would stand, or perhaps, walk a little while together.

Melanctha always made herself escape but often it was with an effort. She did not know what it was that she so badly wanted, but with all her courage Melanctha here was a coward, and so she could not learn to understand.

Melanctha and some man would stand in the evening and would talk together. Sometimes Melanctha would be with another girl and then it was much easier to stay or to escape, for then they could make way for themselves together, and by throwing words and laughter to each other, could keep a man from getting too strong in his attention.

But when Melanctha was alone, and she was so, very often, she would sometimes come very near to making a long step on the road that leads to wisdom. Some man would learn a good deal about her in the talk, never altogether truly, for Melanctha all her life did not know how to tell a story wholly. She always, and yet not with inten-

Early Days of a Woman

tion, managed to leave out big pieces which make a story very different, for when it came to what had happened and what she had said and what it was she had really done, Melanctha never could remember right. The man would sometimes come a little nearer, would detain her, would hold her arm or make his jokes a little clearer, and then Melanctha would always make herself escape. The man thinking that she really had world wisdom would not make his meaning clear, and believing that she was deciding with him he never went so fast that he could stop her when at last she made herself escape.

And so Melanctha wandered on the edge of wisdom. "Say, Sis, why don't you when you come here stay a little longer?" they would all ask her, and they would hold her for an answer, and she would laugh, and sometimes she did stay longer, but always just in time she made herself escape.

Melanctha Herbert wanted very much to know and yet she feared the knowledge. As she grew older she often stayed a good deal longer, and sometimes it was almost a balanced struggle, but she always made herself escape.

Next to the railroad yard it was the shipping docks that Melanctha loved best when she wandered. Often she was alone, sometimes she was with some better kind of black girl, and she would stand a long time and watch the men working at unloading, and see the steamers do their coaling, and she would listen with full feeling to the yowling of the free swinging negroes, as they ran, with their powerful loose jointed bodies and their childish savage yelling, pushing, carrying, pulling great loads from the ships to the warehouses.

The men would call out, "Say, Sis, look out or we'll come and catch yer," or "Hi, there, you yaller girl, come here and we'll take you sailin'." And then, too, Melanctha would learn to know some of the serious foreign sailors who told her all sorts of wonders, and a cook would sometimes take her and her friends over a ship and show where he made his messes and where the men slept, and where the shops were, and how everything was made by themselves, right there, on ship board.

Richard Wright

Melanctha loved to see these dark and smelly places. She always loved to watch and talk and listen with men who worked hard. But it was never from these rougher people that Melanctha tried to learn the ways that lead to wisdom. In the daylight she always liked to talk with rough men and to listen to their lives and about their work and their various ways of doing, but when the darkness covered everything all over, Melanctha would meet, and stand, and talk with a clerk or a young shipping agent who had seen her watching, and so it was that she would try to learn to understand.

And then Melanctha was fond of watching men work on new buildings. She loved to see them hoisting, digging, sawing and stone cutting. Here, too, in the daylight, she always learned to know the common workmen. "Heh, Sis, look out or that rock will fall on you and smash you all up into little pieces. Do you think you would make a nice jelly?" And then they would all laugh and feel that their jokes were very funny. And "Say, you pretty yaller girl, would it scare you bad to stand up here on top where I be? See if you've got grit and come up here where I can hold you. All you got to do is to sit still on that there rock that they're just hoistin', and then when you get here I'll hold you tight, don't you be scared Sis."

Sometimes Melanctha would do some of these things that had much danger, and always with such men, she showed her power and her breakneck courage. Once she slipped and fell from a high place. A workman caught her and so she was not killed, but her left arm was badly broken.

All the men crowded around her. They admired her boldness in doing and in bearing pain when her arm was broken. They all went along with her with great respect to the doctor, and then they took her home in triumph and all of them were bragging about her not squealing.

James Herbert was home where his wife lived, that day. He was furious when he saw the workmen and Melanctha. He drove the men away with curses so that they were all very nearly fighting, and he would not let a doctor come in to attend Melanctha. "Why don't you see to that girl better, you, you're her mother."

Early Days of a Woman

James Herbert did not fight things out now any more with his daughter. He feared her tongue, and her school learning, and the way she had of saying things that were very nasty to a brutal black man who knew nothing. And Melanctha just then hated him very badly in her suffering.

And so this was the way Melanctha lived the four years of her beginning as a woman. And many things happened to Melanctha, but she knew very well that none of them had led her on to the right way, that certain way that was to lead her to world wisdom.

WILL CUPPY:

"I wish I had written

A Good Old-fashioned Christmas

by ROBERT BENCHLEY"

Any reader of HOW TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS FROM THE APES, HOW TO BE A HERMIT or any other Cuppy book, realizes that Will Cuppy occupies a position as one of the best humorists in America. While Mr. Cuppy wishes he had written this sketch by the late Robert Benchley, he says: "I should be very glad and very lucky to have written anything by Robert Benchley. As for his place in American letters, some solid critic some day will be dealing with the laughing body of his work, and I wonder what the poor fellow will find to say. He'd better be good. I suggest, for one thing, that Benchley was divinely inspired; which could easily be one of the reasons for his stature as a humorist. Meanwhile, here's 'A Good Old-Fashioned Christmas.'"

SOONER or later at every Christmas party, just as things are beginning to get good, someone shuts his eyes, puts his head back and moans softly: "Ah, well, this isn't like the old days. We don't seem to have any good old-fashioned Christmases any more." To which the answer from my corner of the room is: "All right! That suits me!"

Just what they have in mind when they say "old-fashioned Christmas" you never can pin them down to telling. "Lots of snow," they mutter, "and lots of food." Yet, if you work it right, you can still get plenty of snow and food today. Snow, at any rate.

Then there seems to be some idea of the old-fashioned Christmas being, of necessity, in the country. It doesn't make any difference

From BENCHLEY BESIDE HIMSELF. Copyright, 1927, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

A Good Old-fashioned Christmas

whether you were raised on a farm or whether your ideas of a rural Christmas were gleaned from pictures in old copies of "Harper's Young People," you must give folks to understand that such were the surroundings in which you spent your childhood holidays. And that, ah, me, those days will never come again!

Well, supposing you get your wish some time. Supposing, let us say, your wife's folks who live up in East Russet, Vermont, write and ask you to come up and bring the children for a good old-fashioned 'Christmas, "while we are all still together," they add cheerily with their flair for putting everybody in good humor.

Hurray, hurray! Off to the country for Christmas! Pack up all the warm clothes in the house, for you will need them up there where the air is clean and cold. Snow-shoes? Yes, put them in, or better yet, Daddy will carry them. What fun! Take along some sleigh-bells to jangle in case there aren't enough on the pung. There must be jangling sleigh-bells. And whiskey for frost-bite. Or is it snake-bite that whiskey is for? Anyway, put it in! We're off! Good-by, all! Good-by! JANGLE-JANGLE-JANGLE-Jangle-Jangle-Jangle-jangle-jangle-jangle-jangle-jangle!

In order to get to East Russet you take the Vermont Central as far as Twitchell's Falls and change there for Torpid River Junction, where a spur line takes you right into Gormley. At Gormley you are met by a buck-board which takes you back to Torpid River Junction again. By this time a train or something has come in which will wait for the local from Besus. While waiting for this you will have time to send your little boy to school, so that he can finish the third grade.

At East Russet Grandpa meets you with the sleigh. The bags are piled in and Mother sits in front with Lester in her lap while Daddy takes Junior and Ga-Ga in back with him and the luggage. Giddap, Esther Girl!

Esther Girl giddaps, and two suitcases fall out. Heigh-ho! Out we get and pick them up, brushing the snow off and filling our cuffs with it as we do so. After all, there's nothing like snow for getting up one's cuffs. Good clean snow never hurt anyone. Which is lucky,

Will Cuppy

because after you have gone a mile or so, you discover that Ga-Ga is missing. Never mind, she is a self-reliant little girl and will doubtless find her way to the farm by herself. Probably she will be there waiting for you when you arrive.

The farm is situated on a hill about eleven hundred miles from the center of town, just before you get into Canada. If there is a breeze in winter, they get it. But what do they care for breezes, so long as they have the Little Colonel oil-heater in the front room, to make everything cozy and warm within a radius of four inches! And the big open fireplace with the draught coming down it! Fun for everybody!

You are just driving up to the farmhouse in the sleigh, with the entire right leg frozen where the lap robe has slipped out. Grandma is waiting for you at the door and you bustle in, all glowing with good cheer. "Merry Christmas, Grandma!" Lester is cross and Junior is asleep and has to be dragged by the hand upstairs, bumping against each step all the way. It is so late that you decide you all might as well go to bed, especially as you learn that breakfast is at four-thirty. It usually is at four, but Christmas being a holiday everyone sleeps late.

As you reach the top of the stairs you get into a current of cold air which has something of the quality of the temperature in a nice well-regulated crypt. This is the Bed Room Zone, and in it the thermometer never tops the zero mark from October fifteenth until the middle of May. Those rooms in which no one sleeps are used to store perishable vegetables in, and someone has to keep thumbing the tomatoes and pears every so often to prevent their getting so hard that they crack.

The way to get undressed for bed in one of Grandpa's bedrooms is as follows: Starting from the foot of the stairs where it is warm, run up two at a time to keep the circulation going as long as possible. Opening the bedroom door with one hand, tear down the curtains from the windows with the other, pick up the rugs from the floor and snatch the spread from the top of the bureau. Pile all these on the bed, cover with the closet door which you have wrenched from

A Good Old-fashioned Christmas

its hinges, and leap quickly underneath. It sometimes helps to put on a pair of rubbers over your shoes.

And even when you are in bed, you have no guarantee of going to sleep. Grandpa's mattresses seem to contain the overflow from the silo, corn-husks, baked-potato skins and long, stringy affairs which feel like pipe cleaners. On a cold night, snuggling down into these is about like snuggling down into a bed of damp pine-cones out in the forest.

Then there are Things abroad in the house. Shortly after you get into bed, the stairs start snapping. Next something runs along the roof over your head. You say to yourself: "Don't be silly. It's only Santa Claus." Then it runs along in the wall behind the head of the bed. Santa Claus wouldn't do that. Down the long hall which leads into the ell of the house you can hear the wind sighing softly, with an occasional reassuring bang of a door.

The unmistakable sound of someone dying in great pain rises from just below the window-sill. It is a sort of low moan, with just a touch of strangulation in it. Perhaps Santa has fallen off the roof. Perhaps that story you once heard about Grandpa's house having been a hang-out for Revolutionary smugglers is true, and one of the smugglers has come back for his umbrella. The only place at a time like this is down under the bed-clothes. But the children become frightened and demand to be taken home, and Grandpa has to be called to explain that it is only Blue Bell out in the barn. Blue Bell has asthma, and on a cold night they have to be very patient with her.

Christmas morning dawns cloudy and cold, with the threat of plenty more snow, and after all, what would Christmas be without snow? You lie in bed for one hour and a quarter trying to figure out how you can get up without losing the covers from around you. A glance at the water pitcher shows that it is time for them to put the red ball up for skating. You think of the nice warm bathroom at home, and decide that you can wait until you get back there before shaving.

This breaking the ice in the pitcher seems to be a feature of the early lives of all great men which they look back on with tremendous

Will Cuppy

satisfaction. "When I was a boy, I used to have to break the ice in the pitcher every morning before I could wash," is said with as much pride as one might say, "When I was a boy I stood at the head of my class." Just what virtue there is in having to break ice in a pitcher is not evident, unless it lies in their taking the bother to break the ice and wash at all. Anytime, that I have to break ice in a pitcher as a preliminary to washing, I go unwashed, that's all. And Benjamin Franklin and U. S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes can laugh as much as they like. I'm nobody's fool about a thing like that.

Getting the children dressed is a lot of fun when you have to keep pumping their limbs up and down to keep them from freezing out stiff. The children love it and are just as bright and merry as little pixies when it is time to go downstairs and say "Good Morning" to Grandpa and Grandma. The entire family enters the dining-room purple and chattering and exceedingly cross.

After breakfast everyone begins getting dinner. The kitchen being the only warm place in the house may have something to do with it. But before long there are so many potato peelings and turkey feathers and squash seeds and floating bits of pie crust in the kitchen that the women-folk send you and the children off into the front part of the house to amuse yourselves and get out of the way.

Then what a jolly time you and the kiddies and Grandpa have together! You can either slide on the horse-hair sofa, or play "The Wayside Chapel" on the piano (the piano has scroll-work on either side of the music rack with yellow silk showing through), or look out the window and see ten miles of dark gray snow. Perhaps you may even go out to the barn and look at the horses and cows, but really, as you walk down between the stalls, when you have seen one horse or one cow you have seen them all. And besides, the cold in the barn has an added flavor of damp harness leather and musty carriage upholstery which eats into your very marrow.

Of course, there are the presents to be distributed, but that takes on much the same aspect as the same ceremony in the new-fashioned Christmas, except that in the really old-fashioned Christmas the presents weren't so tricky. Children got mostly mittens and shoes, with

A Good Old-fashioned Christmas

a sled thrown in sometimes for dissipation. Where a boy today is bored by three o'clock in the afternoon with his electric grain-elevator and miniature pond with real perch in it, the old-fashioned boy was lucky if he got a copy of "Naval Battles of the War of 1812" and an orange. Now this feature is often brought up in praise of the old way of doing things. "I tell you," says Uncle Gyp, "the children in my time never got such presents as you get today." And he seems proud of the fact, as if there were some virtue accruing to him for it. If the children of today can get electric grain-elevators and tin automobiles for Christmas, why aren't they that much better off than their grandfathers who got only wristlets? Learning the value of money, which seems to be the only argument of the stand-patters, doesn't hold very much water as a Christmas slogan. The value of money can be learned in just about five minutes when the time comes, but Christmas is not the season.

But to return to the farm, where you and the kiddies and Gramp' are killing time. You can either bring in wood from the woodshed, or thaw out the pump, or read the books in the bookcase over the writing-desk. Of the three, bringing in the wood will probably be the most fun, as you are likely to burn yourself thawing out the pump, and the list of reading matter on hand includes "The Life and Deeds of General Grant," "Our First Century," "Andy's Trip to Portland," bound volumes of the Jersey Cattle Breeders' Gazette and "Diseases of the Horse." Then there are some old copies of "Round the Lamp" for the years 1850-54 and some colored plates showing plans for the approaching World's Fair at Chicago.

Thus the time passes, in one round of gayety after another, until you are summoned to dinner. Here all cavilling must cease. The dinner lives up to the advertising. If an old-fashioned Christmas could consist entirely of dinner without the old-fashioned bedrooms, the old-fashioned pitcher, and the old-fashioned entertainments, we professional pessimists wouldn't have a turkey-leg left to stand on. But, as has been pointed out, it is possible to get a good dinner without going up to East Russet, Vt., or if it isn't, then our civilization has been a failure.

Will Cuppy

And the dinner only makes the aftermath seem worse. According to an old custom of the human race, everyone overeats. Deliberately and with considerable gusto you sit at the table and say pleasantly: "My, but I won't be able to walk after this. Just a little more of the dark meat, please, Grandpa, and just a dab of stuffing. Oh, dear, that's too much!" You haven't the excuse of the drunkard, who becomes oblivious to his excesses after several drinks. You know what you are doing, and yet you make light of it and even laugh about it as long as you *can* laugh without splitting out a seam.

And then you sit and moan. If you were having a good new-fashioned Christmas you could go out to the movies or take a walk, or a ride, but to be really old-fashioned you must stick close to the house, for in the old days there were no movies and no automobiles and if you wanted to take a walk you had to have the hired man go ahead of you with a snow-shovel and make a tunnel. There are probably plenty of things to do in the country today, and just as many automobiles and electric lights as there are in the city, but you can't call Christmas with all these improvements "an old-fashioned Christmas." That's cheating.

If you are going through with the thing right, you have got to retire to the sitting-room after dinner and *sit*. Of course, you can go out and play in the snow if you want to, but you know as well as I do that this playing in the snow is all right when you are small but a bit trying on anyone over thirty. And anyway, it always began to snow along about three in the afternoon of an old-fashioned Christmas day, with a cheery old leaden sky overhead and a jolly old gale sweeping around the corners of the house.

No, you simply must sit indoors, in front of a fire if you insist, but nevertheless with nothing much to do. The children are sleepy and snarling. Grandpa is just sleepy. Someone tries to start the conversation, but everyone else is too gorged with food to be able to move the lower jaw sufficiently to articulate. It develops that the family is in possession of the loudest-ticking clock in the world and along about four o'clock it begins to break its own record. A stenographic report of the proceedings would read as follows:

A Good Old-fashioned Christmas

“Ho-hum! I’m sleepy! I shouldn’t have eaten so much.”

“Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock—”

“It seems just like Sunday, doesn’t it?”

“Look at Grandpa! He’s asleep.”

“Here, Junior! Don’t plague Grandpa. Let him sleep.”

“Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock—”

“Junior! Let Grandpa alone! Do you want Mamma to take you up-stairs?”

“Ho-hum!”

“Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock—”

Louder and louder the clock ticks, until something snaps in your brain and you give a sudden leap into the air with a scream, finally descending to strangle each of the family in turn, and Grandpa as he sleeps. Then, as you feel your end is near, all the warm things you have ever known come back to you, in a flash. You remember the hot Sunday subway to Coney, your trip to Mexico, the bull-fighters of Spain.

You dash out into the snowdrifts and plunge along until you sink exhausted. Only the fact that this article ends here keeps you from freezing to death, with an obituary the next day reading:

DIED suddenly, at East Russet, Vt., of an old-fashioned Christmas.

WOLCOTT GIBBS:

"I wish I had written

Over the River and Through the Wood

by JOHN O'HARA"

Mr. Gibbs whose contributions to the pages of The New Yorker embrace drama criticism, fiction and "Profiles" is eminently qualified to nominate this story which to him "seems, in less than three thousand words, to tell the whole story of a complex and important character. At the end, there is nothing further the reader needs to know about Mr. Winfield, though he might easily have been the subject of a complete novel. His life has been lived and now, in a small, humiliating tragedy, it is finished. Mr. O'Hara writes with a rigid economy, accomplished without any sense of strain, that excludes all irrelevancies and still leaves nothing out. Each sentence, that is, has its clear purpose, carrying its full legitimate weight of information, and no more. This kind of writing is, of course, any editor's delight. It is also the kind that leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that he is being offered the truth. I know of nothing done recently that can match it for brevity and emotional force. I wish I ever expected to write anything half as good."

M R. WINFIELD's hat and coat and bag were in the hall of his flat, and when the man downstairs phoned to tell him the car was waiting, he was all ready. He went downstairs and said hello to Robert, the giant Negro chauffeur, and handed Robert the bag, and followed him out to the car. For the first time he knew that he and his granddaughter were not to make the trip alone, for there were two girls with Sheila, and she introduced them: "Grandfather, I'd like to have you meet my friends. This is Helen Wales, and this is

Permission of the author. Copyright, 1934, John O'Hara. Originally published in *The New Yorker*.

Over the River and Through the Wood

Kay Farnsworth. My grandfather, Mr. Winfield." The names meant nothing to Mr. Winfield. What did mean something was that he was going to have to sit on the strapontin, or else sit outside with Robert, which was no good. Not that Robert wasn't all right, as chauffeurs go, but Robert was wearing a raccoon coat, and Mr. Winfield had no raccoon coat. So it was sit outside and freeze, or sit on the little seat inside.

Apparently it made no difference to Sheila. He got inside, and when he closed the door behind him, she said, "I wonder what's keeping Robert?"

"He's strapping my bag on that thing in the back," said Mr. Winfield. Sheila obviously was not pleased by the delay, but in a minute or two they got under way, and Mr. Winfield rather admired the way Sheila carried on her conversation with her two friends and at the same time routed and rerouted Robert so that they were out of the city in no time. To Mr. Winfield it was pleasant and a little like old times to have the direction and the driving done for you. Not that he ever drove himself any more, but when he hired a car, he always had to tell the driver just where to turn and where to go straight. Sheila knew.

The girls were of an age, and the people they talked about were referred to by first names only. Ted, Bob, Gwen, Jean, Mary, Liz. Listening with some care, Mr. Winfield discovered that school acquaintances and boys whom they knew slightly were mentioned by their last names.

Sitting where he was, he could not watch the girls' faces, but he formed his opinions of the Misses Wales and Farnsworth. Miss Wales supplied every other word when Sheila was talking. She was smallest of the three girls, and the peppy kind. Miss Farnsworth looked out of the window most of the time, and said hardly anything. Mr. Winfield could see more of her face, and he found himself asking, "I wonder if that child really likes anybody." Well, that was one way to be. Make the world show *you*. You could get away with it, too, if you were as attractive as Miss Farnsworth. The miles streamed by and the weather got colder, and Mr. Winfield listened

Wolcott Gibbs

and soon understood that he was not expected to contribute to the conversation.

"We stop here," said Sheila. It was Danbury, and they came to a halt in front of the old hotel. "Wouldn't you like to stop here, Grandfather?" He understood then that his daughter had told Sheila to stop here; obediently and with no dignity he got out. When he returned to the car, the three girls were finishing their cigarettes, and as he climbed back in the car, he noticed how Miss Farnsworth had been looking at him and continued to look at him, almost as though she were making a point of not helping him—although he wanted no help. He wasn't really an *old* man, an *old man*. Sixty-five.

The interior of the car was filled with cigarette smoke, and Miss Farnsworth asked Mr. Winfield if he'd mind opening a window. He opened it. Then Sheila said one window didn't make any difference; open both windows, just long enough to let the smoke get out. "My! That air feels good," said Miss Wales. Then: "But what about you, Mr. Winfield? You're in a terrible draught there." He replied, for the first use of his voice thus far, that he did not mind. And at that moment the girls thought they saw a car belonging to a boy they knew, and they were in Sheffield, just over the Massachusetts line, before Miss Farnsworth realized that the windows were open and creating a terrible draught. She realized it when the robe slipped off her leg, and she asked Mr. Winfield if he would mind closing the window. But he was unable to get the crank started; his hands were so cold there was no strength in them. "We'll be there soon," said Sheila. Nevertheless, she closed the windows, not even acknowledging Mr. Winfield's shamed apologies.

He had to be first out of the car when they arrived at the house in Lenox, and it was then that he regretted having chosen the stra-pontin. He started to get out of the car, but when his feet touched the ground, the hard-packed frozen cinders of the driveway flew up at him. His knees had no strength in them, and he stayed there on the ground for a second or two, trying to smile it off. Helpful Robert—almost too helpful; Mr. Winfield wasn't that old—jumped

Over the River and Through the Wood

out of the car and put his hands in Mr. Winfield's armpits. The girls were frightened, but it seemed to Mr. Winfield that they kept looking toward the library window, as though they were afraid Sheila's mother would be there and blaming them for his fall. If they only knew . . .

"You go on in, Grandfather, if you're sure you're all right," said Sheila. "I have to tell Robert about the bags."

"I'm all right," said Mr. Winfield. He went in, and hung up his coat and hat in the clothes closet under the stairs. A telephone was there, and in front of the telephone a yellow card of numbers frequently called. Mr. Winfield recognized only a few of the names, but he guessed there was an altogether different crowd of people coming up here these days. Fifteen years make a difference, even in a place like Lenox. Yes, it was fifteen years since he had been up here in the summertime. These trips, these annual trips for Thanksgiving, you couldn't tell anything about the character of the place from these trips. You never saw anybody but your own family and, like today, their guests.

He went out to the darkened hall and Ula, the maid, jumped in fright. "Ugh. Oh. It's you, Mr. Winfield. You like to scare me."

"Hello, Ula. Glad to see you're still holding the fort. Where's Mrs. Day?"

"Upstairs, I think . . . Here she is now," said Ula.

His daughter came down the steps; her hand on the banister was all he could see at first. "Is that you, Father? I thought I heard the car."

"Hello, Mary," he said. At the foot of the stairs they went through the travesty of a kiss that both knew so well. He leaned forward so that his head was above her shoulder. To Ula, a good Catholic, it must have looked like the kiss of peace. "*Pax tibi*," Mr. Winfield felt like saying, but he said, "Where have you—"

"Father! You're freezing!" Mrs. Day tried very hard to keep the vexation out of her tone.

"It was a cold ride," he said. "This time of year. We had snow flurries between Danbury and Sheffield, but the girls enjoyed it."

Wolcott Gibbs

"You go right upstairs and have a bath, and I'll send up—what would you like? Tea? Chocolate? Coffee?"

He was amused. The obvious thing would be to offer him a drink, and it was so apparent that she was talking fast to avoid that. "I think cocoa would be fine, but you'd better have a real drink for Sheila and her friends."

"Now why do you take that tone, Father? You could have a drink if you wanted it, but you're on the wagon, aren't you?"

"Still on it. Up there with the driver."

"Well, and besides, liquor doesn't warm you up the same way something hot does. I'll send up some chocolate. I've put you in your old room, of course. You'll have to share the bathroom with one of Sheila's friends, but that's the best I could do. Sheila wasn't even sure she was coming till the very last minute."

"I'll be all right. It sounds like—I didn't bring evening clothes."

"We're not dressing."

He went upstairs. His room, the room itself, was just about the same; but the furniture was rearranged, his favorite chair not where he liked it best, but it was a good house; you could tell it was being lived in, *this year*, today, tomorrow. Little touches, ashtrays, flowers. It seemed young and white, cool with a warm breath, comfortable—and absolutely strange to him and, more especially, he to it. Whatever of the past this house had held, it was gone now. He sat in the chair and lit a cigarette. In a wave, in a lump, in a gust, the old thoughts came to him. Most of the year they were in the back of his mind, but up here Mr. Winfield held a sort of annual review of far-off, but never-out-of-sight regrets. This house, it used to be his until Mary's husband bought it. A good price, and in 1921 he certainly needed the money. He needed everything, and today he had an income from the money he got for this house, and that was about all. He remembered the day Mary's husband came to him and said, "Mr. Winfield, I hate to have to be the one to do this, but Mary—Mary doesn't—well, she thinks you weren't very nice to Mrs. Winfield. I don't know anything about it myself, of course, but that's what Mary thinks. I expected, naturally, I thought you'd come and live with us

Over the River and Through the Wood

now that Mrs. Winfield has died, but—well, the point is, I know you've lost a lot of money, and also I happen to know about Mrs. Winfield's will. So I'm prepared to make you a pretty good offer, strictly legitimate based on current values, for the house in Lenox. I'll pay the delinquent taxes myself and give you a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the house and grounds. That ought to be enough to pay off your debts and give you a fairly decent income. And, uh, I happen to have a friend who knows Mr. Harding quite well. Fact, he sees the President informally one night a week, and I know he'd be only too glad, if you were interested . . .”

He remembered that had tempted him. Harding might have fixed it so he could go to London, where Enid Walter was. But even then it was too late. Enid had gone back to London because he didn't have the guts to divorce his wife, and the reason he wouldn't divorce his wife was that he wanted to “protect” Mary, and Mary's standing, and Mary's husband's standing, and Mary's little daughter's standing; and now he was “protecting” them all over again, by selling his house so that he would not become a family charge—protecting the very same people from the embarrassment of a poor relation. “You can have the house,” he told Day. “It's worth that much, but not more, and I'm grateful to you for not offering me more. About a political job, I think I might like to go to California this winter. I have some friends out there I haven't seen in years.” He had known that that was exactly what Mary and her husband wanted, so he'd gone.

There was a knock on the door. It was Ula with a tray. “Why two cups, Ula?” he said.

“Oh. Di put two cups? So I did. I'm just so used to putting two cups.” She had left the door open behind her, and as she arranged the things on the marble-topped table he saw Sheila and the two girls, standing and moving in the hall.

“This is your room, Farnie,” said Sheila. “You're down this way, Helen. Remember what I told you, Farnie. Come on, Helen.”

“Thank you, Ula,” he said. She went out and closed the door, and he stood for a moment, contemplating the chocolate, then poured

Wolcott Gibbs

out a cup and drank it. It made him a little thirsty, but it was good and warming, and Mary was right; it was better than a drink. He poured out another cup and nibbled on a biscuit. He had an idea: Miss Farnsworth might like some. He admired that girl. She had spunk. He bet she knew what she wanted, or seemed to, and no matter how unimportant were the things she wanted, they were the things she wanted, and not someone else. She could damn well thank the Lord, too, that she was young enough to have a whack at whatever she wanted, and not have to wait the way he had. That girl would make up her mind about a man or a fortune or a career, and by God she would attain whatever it was. If she found, as she surely would find, that nothing ever was enough, she'd at least find it out in time; and early disillusionment carried a compensatory philosophical attitude, which in a hard girl like this one would take nothing from her charm. Mr. Winfield felt her charm, and began regarding her as the most interesting person he had met in many dull years. It would be fun to talk to her, to sound her out and see how far she had progressed toward, say, ambition or disillusionment. It would be fun to do, and it would be just plain nice of him, as former master of this house, to invite her to have a cup of cocoa with him. Good cocoa.

He made his choice between going out in the hall and knocking on her door, and knocking on her door to the bathroom. He decided on the second procedure because he didn't want anyone to see him knocking on her door. So he entered the bathroom and tapped on the door that led to her room. "In a minute," he thought he heard her say. But then he knew he must have been wrong. It sounded more like "Come in." He hated people who knocked on doors and had to be told two or three times to come in, and it would make a bad impression if he started the friendship that way.

He opened the door, and immediately he saw how right he had been in thinking she had said "In a minute." For Miss Farnsworth was standing in the middle of the room, standing there all but nude. Mr. Winfield instantly knew that this was the end of any worthwhile life he had left. There was cold murder in the girl's eyes, and

Over the River and Through the Wood

loathing and contempt and the promise of the thought his name forever would evoke. She spoke to him: "Get out of here, you dirty old man."

He returned to his room and his chair. Slowly he took a cigarette out of his case, and did not light it. He did everything slowly. There was all the time in the world, too much of it, for him. He knew it would be hours before he would begin to hate himself. For a while he would just sit there and plan his own terror.

H. ALLEN SMITH:

"I wish I had written

Journalism in Tennessee

by MARK TWAIN"

Mr. Smith, the humorist and author of LOW MAN ON A TOTEM POLE, LIFE IN A PUTTY KNIFE FACTORY, and other laugh-getters, has also delighted newspaper readers with his unique style. His answer to "what-do-you-wish-you-had-written" came to him after "having sweat forty-three gallons of low-grade plasma in the last two weeks, I've finally coerced myself into a decision. I could easily stock the New York Public Library with things I wish I'd written. I decided on a Mencken piece, and then switched to Lardner, and from there went to Benchley, and after that I ranged around in Frank Sullivan and Thurber and Joseph Mitchell and Thorne Smith and Damon Runyon. So, I wound up with my ever-lovin' Mark Twain. I give you 'Journalism in Tennessee,' first-rate Twain, employing the exaggeration which served him so well."

The editor of the Memphis *Avalanche* swoops thus mildly down upon a correspondent who posted him as a Radical:—"While he was writing the first word, the middle, dotting his i's, crossing his t's, and punching his period, he knew he was concocting a sentence that was saturated with infamy and reeking with falsehood."—*Exchange*.

I WAS told by the physician that a Southern climate would improve my health, and so I went down to Tennessee, and got a berth on the *Morning Glory* and *Johnson County War-Whoop* as associate editor. When I went on duty I found the chief editor sitting tilted back in a three-legged chair with his feet on a pine table. There was another pine table in the room and another afflicted chair, and both were half buried under newspapers and scraps and sheets of manu-

From SKETCHES, NEW AND OLD. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

Journalism in Tennessee

script. There was a wooden box of sand, sprinkled with cigar stubs and "old soldiers," and a stove with a door hanging by its upper hinge. The chief editor had a long-tailed black frock-coat on, and white linen pants. His boots were small and neatly blacked. He wore a ruffled shirt, a large seal-ring, a standing collar of obsolete pattern, and a checkered neckerchief with the ends hanging down. Date of costume about 1848. He was smoking a cigar, and trying to think of a word, and in pawing his hair he had rumpled his locks a good deal. He was scowling fearfully, and I judged that he was concocting a particularly knotty editorial. He told me to take the exchanges and skim through them and write up the "Spirit of the Tennessee Press," condensing into the article all of their contents that seemed of interest.

I wrote as follows:

SPIRIT OF THE TENNESSEE PRESS

The editors of the *Semi-Weekly Earthquake* evidently labor under a misapprehension with regard to the Ballyhack railroad. It is not the object of the company to leave Buzzardville off to one side. On the contrary, they consider it one of the most important points along the line, and consequently can have no desire to slight it. The gentlemen of the *Earthquake* will, of course, take pleasure in making the correction.

John W. Blossom, Esq., the able editor of the Higginsville *Thunderbolt and Battle Cry of Freedom*, arrived in the city yesterday. He is stopping at the Van Buren House.

We observe that our contemporary of the Mud Springs *Morning Howl* has fallen into the error of supposing that the election of Van Werter is not an established fact, but he will have discovered his mistake before this reminder reaches him, no doubt. He was doubtless misled by incomplete election returns.

It is pleasant to note that the city of Blathersville is endeavoring to contract with some New York gentlemen to pave its well-nigh impassable streets with the Nicholson pavement. The *Daily Hurrah* urges the measure with ability, and seems confident of ultimate success.

I passed my manuscript over to the chief editor for acceptance, alteration, or destruction. He glanced at it and his face clouded. He

H. Allen Smith

ran his eye down the pages, and his countenance grew portentous. It was easy to see that something was wrong. Presently he sprang up and said:

"Thunder and lightning! Do you suppose I am going to speak of those cattle that way? Do you suppose my subscribers are going to stand such gruel as that? Give me the pen!"

I never saw a pen scrape and scratch its way so viciously, or plow through another man's verbs and adjectives so relentlessly. While he was in the midst of his work, somebody shot at him through the open window, and marred the symmetry of my ear.

"Ah," said he, "that is that scoundrel Smith, of the *Moral Volcano*—he was due yesterday." And he snatched a navy revolver from his belt and fired. Smith dropped, shot in the thigh. The shot spoiled Smith's aim, who was just taking a second chance, and he crippled a stranger. It was me. Merely a finger shot off.

Then the chief editor went on with his erasures and interlineations. Just as he finished them a hand-grenade came down the stovepipe, and the explosion shivered the stove into a thousand fragments. However, it did no further damage, except that a vagrant piece knocked a couple of my teeth out.

"That stove is utterly ruined," said the chief editor.

I said I believed it was.

"Well, no matter—don't want it this kind of weather. I know the man that did it. I'll get him. Now, *here* is the way this stuff ought to be written."

I took the manuscript. It was scarred with erasures and interlineations till its mother wouldn't have known it if it had had one. It now read as follows:

SPIRIT OF THE TENNESSEE PRESS

The inveterate liars of the *Semi-Weekly Earthquake* are evidently endeavoring to palm off upon a noble and chivalrous people another of their vile and brutal falsehoods with regard to that most glorious conception of the nineteenth century, the Ballyhack railroad. The idea that Buzzardville was to be left off at one side originated in

Journalism in Tennessee

their own fulsome brains—or rather in the settling which *they* regard as brains. They had better swallow this lie if they want to save their abandoned reptile carcasses the cowhiding they so richly deserve.

That ass, Blossom, of the Higginsville *Thunderbolt and Battle Cry of Freedom*, is down here again sponging at the Van Buren.

We observe that the besotted blackguard of the Mud Springs *Morning Howl* is giving out, with his usual propensity for lying, that Van Werter is not elected. The heaven-born mission of journalism is to disseminate truth; to eradicate error; to educate, refine, and elevate the tone of public morals and manners, and make all men more gentle, more virtuous, more charitable, and in all ways better, and holier, and happier; and yet this black-hearted scoundrel degrades his great office persistently to the dissemination of falsehood, calumny, vituperation, and vulgarity.

Blathersville wants a Nicholson pavement—it wants a jail and a poorhouse more. The idea of a pavement in a one-horse town composed of two gin-mills, a blacksmith shop, and that mustard-plaster of a newspaper, the *Daily Hurrah!* The crawling insect, Buckner, who edits the *Hurrah*, is braying about his business with his customary imbecility, and imagining that he is talking sense.

“Now *that* is the way to write—peppery and to the point. Mush-and-milk journalism gives me the fan-tods.”

About this time a brick came through the window with a splintering crash, and gave me a considerable of a jolt in the back. I moved out of range—I began to feel in the way.

The chief said, “That was the Colonel, likely. I’ve been expecting him for two days. He will be up now right away.”

He was correct. The Colonel appeared in the door a moment afterward with a dragoon revolver in his hand.

He said, “Sir, have I the honor of addressing the poltroon who edits this mangy sheet?”

“You have. Be seated, sir. Be careful of the chair, one of its legs is gone. I believe I have the honor of addressing the putrid liar, Colonel Blatherskite Tecumseh?”

“Right, sir. I have a little account to settle with you. If you are at leisure we will begin.”

“I have an article on the ‘Encouraging Progress of Moral and In-

H. Allen Smith

tellectual Development in America' to finish, but there is no hurry. Begin."

Both pistols rang out their fierce clamor at the same instant. The chief lost a lock of his hair, and the Colonel's bullet ended its career in the fleshy part of my thigh. The Colonel's left shoulder was clipped a little. They fired again. Both missed their men this time, but I got my share, a shot in the arm. At the third fire both gentlemen were wounded slightly, and I had a knuckle chipped. I then said, I believed I would go out and take a walk, as this was a private matter, and I had a delicacy about participating in it further. But both gentlemen begged me to keep my seat, and assured me that I was not in the way.

They then talked about the elections and the crops while they re-loaded, and I fell to tying up my wounds. But presently they opened fire again with animation, and every shot took effect—but it is proper to remark that five out of the six fell to my share. The sixth one mortally wounded the Colonel, who remarked, with fine humor, that he would have to say good morning now, as he had business uptown. He then inquired the way to the undertaker's and left.

The chief turned to me and said, "I am expecting company to dinner, and shall have to get ready. It will be a favor to me if you will read proof and attend to the customers."

I winced a little at the idea of attending to the customers, but I was too bewildered by the fusillade that was still ringing in my ears to think of anything to say.

He continued, "Jones will be here at three—cowhide him. Gil-lespie will call earlier, perhaps—throw him out of the window. Ferguson will be along about four—kill him. That is all for to-day, I believe. If you have any odd time, you may write a blistering article on the police—give the chief inspector rats. The cowhides are under the table; weapons in the drawer—ammunition there in the corner—lint and bandages up there in the pigeonholes. In case of accident, go to Lancet, the surgeon, down-stairs. He advertises—we take it out in trade."

He was gone. I shuddered. At the end of the next three hours I

Journalism in Tennessee

had been through perils so awful that all peace of mind and all cheerfulness were gone from me. Gillespie had called and thrown *me* out of the window. Jones arrived promptly, and when I got ready to do the cowhiding he took the job off my hands. In an encounter with a stranger, not in the bill of fare, I had lost my scalp. Another stranger, by the name of Thompson, left me a mere wreck and ruin of chaotic rags. And at last, at bay in the corner, and beset by an infuriated mob of editors, blacklegs, politicians, and desperadoes, who raved and swore and flourished their weapons about my head till the air shimmered with glancing flashes of steel, I was in the act of resigning my berth on the paper when the chief arrived, and with him a rabble of charmed and enthusiastic friends. Then ensued a scene of riot and carnage such as no human pen, or steel one either, could describe. People were shot, probed, dismembered, blown up, thrown out of the window. There was a brief tornado of murky blasphemy, with a confused and frantic war-dance glimmering through it, and then all was over. In five minutes there was silence, and the gory chief and I sat alone and surveyed the sanguinary ruin that strewed the floor around us.

He said, "You'll like this place when you get used to it."

I said, "I'll have to get you to excuse me; I think maybe I might write to suit you after a while; as soon as I had had some practise and learned the language I am confident I could. But, to speak the plain truth, that sort of energy of expression has its inconveniences, and a man is liable to interruption. You see that yourself. Vigorous writing is calculated to elevate the public, no doubt, but then I do not like to attract so much attention as it calls forth. I can't write with comfort when I am interrupted so much as I have been to-day. I like this berth well enough, but I don't like to be left here to wait on the customers. The experiences are novel, I grant you, and entertaining, too, after a fashion, but they are not judiciously distributed. A gentleman shoots at you through the window and cripples *me*; a bomb-shell comes down the stove-pipe for your gratification and sends the stove door down *my* throat; a friend drops in to swap compliments with you, and freckles *me* with bullet-holes till my skin won't hold

H. Allen Smith

my principles; you go to dinner, and Jones comes with his cowhide, Gillespie throws me out of the window, Thompson tears all my clothes off, and an entire stranger takes my scalp with the easy freedom of an old acquaintance; and in less than five minutes all the blackguards in the country arrive in their war-paint, and proceed to scare the rest of me to death with their tomahawks. Take it altogether, I never had such a spirited time in all my life as I have had to-day. No; I like you, and I like your calm unruffled way of explaining things to the customers, but you see I am not used to it. The Southern heart is too impulsive; Southern hospitality is too lavish with the stranger. The paragraphs which I have written to-day, and into whose cold sentences your masterly hand has infused the fervent spirit of Tennessean journalism, will wake up another nest of hornets. All that mob of editors will come—and they will come hungry, too, and want somebody for breakfast. I shall have to bid you adieu. I decline to be present at these festivities. I came South for my health, I will go back on the same errand, and suddenly. Tennessean journalism is too stirring for me."

After which we parted with mutual regret, and I took apartments at the hospital.

JESSE STUART:

"I wish I had written

The Cotter's Saturday Night

by ROBERT BURNS"

Jesse Stuart, the author of the novel TAPS FOR PRIVATE TUSSY, and ALBUM OF DESTINY, a collection of his poetry, is also acclaimed for the high quality of his short stories. It seems, however, that poetry was his first love and—as for Robert Burns and "The Cotter's Saturday Night"—"I choose this poem because I have loved Robert Burns' poetry since I have been a child. One of my uncles used to sing me Scottish ballads and songs of Robert Burns when I was a small boy, and they stayed in my head. I loved them. I was never able to get hold of a copy of Burns' poetry until my high school teacher gave me one. And that book of poetry changed my life. I carried it with me when I hunted possums at night in the Kentucky hills. . . . I carried it with me until I wore it out. I wore out two more of his volumes of poetry carrying them in my pockets wherever I went. I thought if this Scottish farmer without a high school education could write poetry that would endure then a plowboy among the hills of Kentucky who was of Scottish descent had a chance to write poetry that would endure. Robert Burns is a peasant poet and how many people we have in this world who are poor people, have been raised similar to Burns and understand what he is writing about. He is one of the great poets of the world, a natural poet and he has probably given enjoyment to more people than any other poet living or dead."

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!

No mercenary bard his homage pays:

With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,

My dearest meed a friend's esteem and praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,

The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;

Jesse Stuart

The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been—
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close,
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' crows to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes;
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flicterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnilee,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers:

The Cotter's Saturday Night

The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.

The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amraig as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
'And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!'

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny haflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy

Jesse Stuart

What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel-pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
'If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.'

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth—
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts, dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting truth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food:
The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it good;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond auld sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle form a circle wide;

The Cotter's Saturday Night

The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide—
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And 'Let us worship God!' he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:

Jesse Stuart

How he, was lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'l'on's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing'
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:

The Cotter's Saturday Night

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
‘An honest man’s the noblest work of God;’
And certes, in fair virtue’s heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling’s pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin’d!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury’s contagion, weak and vile;
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed thro’ Wallace’s undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die—the second glorious part,
(The patriot’s God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia’s realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

KAY BOYLE:

"I wish I had written

The Ballad of the Sad Café

by CARSON McCULLERS"

Miss Boyle, novelist and poet, whose short stories have on many occasions been awarded unusual recognition, including the O. Henry award twice, is the author of THE WHITE HORSES OF VIENNA, AVALANCHE and other books. Miss Boyle, in bringing to the selection of Miss McCullers' unusual story the same high standards she exacts of her own work, says: "Aside from the first quick unconsidered emotion which moved me as I read for the first time 'The Ballad of the Sad Café,' there are several quite definable reasons why I still wish, two and a half years later, that I had been its author. One or two of them I would like to set down here.

"I believe the better part of envy to be admiration, and in this story of Carson McCullers' I admire the bold objective approach—graced with reverence and with humility as it is; I admire the ruthless and fearless self-imposed experience of severing herself from all that would have made the content of this story applicable to and identifiable with self. I speak first of this because it denotes a sense of proportion which we demand of architects and painters, of plumbers and carpenters, but not of women writers. I pay homage to it because the work of many women writers of our century has been hopelessly invalidated by the shape and dress of that tender, fragile, insufferable, and recognizable figure of feminine ego which is pivot for their books. In 'The Ballad of the Sad Café,' Carson McCullers accepted the responsibility of being artisan as well as sensitive artist. I believe that the deliberation of thought which brings one, while still young, to the knowledge that sensitive artistry is not enough, is undoubtedly the greatest endowment a writer can have.

"Second, there is this reason why I wish I had written 'The Ballad of the Sad Café.' Its specifications are far more profound than time of year, than geographical place, than century—although time of year, and place, and even the hour of the day and night are technically there. Each line of

The Ballad of the Sad Café

it has been written not for a wide public or for a small group of critics, but as though in the presence of the very simplest and therefore the very greatest human emotions. It is as if love, and anger, and grief were there as audience, and it was their approval or their censure which brought the action and the speech of despair, and patience, and loyalty to remarkable articulation.

"We come, then, to the language of this story. It proceeds with beauty and with balance to evoke not only the exact image of what was seen, but the exact measure of its truth."

"I should like to have written:

"It was toward midnight on a soft quiet evening in April. The sky was the color of a blue swamp iris, the moon clear and bright. . . . Down by the creek the square brick factory was yellow with light and there was the faint, steady hum of the looms. It was such a night when it is good to hear from far-away, across the dark fields, the slow song of a Negro on his way to make love.'"

THE town itself is dreary; not much is there except the cotton mill, the two-room houses where the workers live, a few peach trees, a church with two colored windows, and a miserable main street only a hundred yards long. On Saturdays the tenants from the nearby farms come in for a day of talk and trade. Otherwise the town is lonesome, sad, and like a place that is far off and estranged from all other places in the world. The nearest train stop is Society City, and the Greyhound and White Bus Lines use the Forks Falls Road which is three miles away. The winters here are short and raw, the summers white with glare and fiery hot.

If you walk along the main street on an August afternoon there is nothing whatsoever to do. The largest building, in the very center of the town, is boarded up completely and leans so far to the right that it seems bound to collapse at any minute. The house is very old. There is about it a curious, cracked look that is very puzzling until you suddenly realize that at one time, and long ago, the right side of the front porch had been painted and part of the wall—but the

Copyright, 1943, by Hearst Magazines Inc., reprinted by permission of Carson McCullers. Originally published in *Harper's Bazaar*.

Kay Boyle

painting was left unfinished and one portion of the house is darker and dingier than the other. The building looks completely deserted. Nevertheless, on the second floor there is one window which is not boarded; sometimes in the late afternoon when the heat is at its worst a hand will slowly open the shutter and a face will look down on the town. It is a face like the terrible dim faces known in dreams—sexless and white, with two gray crossed eyes which are turned inward so sharply that they seem to be exchanging with each other one long and secret gaze of grief. The face lingers at the window for an hour or so, then the shutters are closed once more, and as likely as not there will not be another soul to be seen along the main street. These August afternoons—when your shift is finished there is absolutely nothing to do; you might as well walk down to the Forks Falls Road and listen to the chain gang.

However, here in this very town there was once a café. And this old boarded-up house was unlike any other place for many miles around. There were tables with cloths and paper napkins, colored streamers from the electric fans, great gatherings on Saturday nights. The owner of the place was Miss Amelia Evans. But the person most responsible for the success and gaiety of the place was a hunchback called Cousin Lymon. One other person had a part in the story of this café—he was the former husband of Miss Amelia, a terrible character who returned to the town after a long term in the penitentiary, caused ruin, and then went on his way again. The café has long since been closed, but it is still remembered.

The place was not always a café. Miss Amelia inherited the building from her father, and it was a store that carried mostly feed, guano, and staples such as meal and snuff. Miss Amelia was rich. In addition to the store she operated a still three miles back in the swamp and ran out the best liquor in the county. She was a dark, tall woman with bones and muscles like a man. Her hair was cut short and brushed back from the forehead and there was about her sunburned face a tense, haggard quality. She might have been a handsome woman if, even then, she was not slightly cross-eyed. There were those who would have courted her, but Miss Amelia cared noth-

The Ballad of the Sad Café

ing for the love of men and was a solitary person. Her marriage had been unlike any other marriage ever contracted in this county—it was a strange and dangerous marriage, lasting only for ten days, that left the whole town wondering and shocked. Except for this queer marriage Miss Amelia had lived her life alone. Often she spent whole nights back in her shed in the swamp, dressed in overalls and gum boots, silently guarding the low fire of the still.

With all things which could be made by the hands Miss Amelia prospered. She sold chitterlins and sausage in the town nearby. On fine autumn days she ground sorghum, and the syrup from her vats was dark golden and delicately flavored. She built the brick privy behind her store in only two weeks and was skilled in carpentering. It was only with people that Miss Amelia was not at ease. People, unless they are nilly-willy or very sick, cannot be taken into the hands and changed over night to something more worth-while and profitable. So that the only use that Miss Amelia had for other people was to make money out of them. And in this she succeeded. Mortgages on crops and property, a sawmill, money in the bank—she was the richest woman for miles around. She would have been rich as a congressman if it were not for her one great failing, and that was her passion for lawsuits and the courts. She would involve herself in long and bitter litigation over just a trifle. It was said that if Miss Amelia so much as stumbled over a rock in the road she would glance around instinctively as though looking for something to sue about it. Aside from these lawsuits she lived a steady life and every day was very much like the day that had gone before. With the exception of her ten-day marriage, nothing happened to change this until the spring of the year that Miss Amelia was thirty years old.

It was toward midnight on a soft quiet evening in April. The sky was the color of a blue swamp iris, the moon clear and bright. The crops that spring promised well and in the past weeks the mill had run a night shift. Down by the creek the square brick factory was yellow with light and there was the faint, steady hum of the looms. It was such a night when it is good to hear from far-away, across the dark fields, the slow song of a Negro on his way to make love. Or

Kay Boyle

when it is pleasant to sit quietly and pick a guitar or simply to rest alone and think of nothing at all. The street that evening was deserted, but Miss Amelia's store was lighted and on the porch outside there were five people. One of these was Stumpy MacPhail, a foreman with a red face and dainty, purplish hands. On the top step were two boys in overalls, the Rainey twins—both of them lanky and slow, with white hair and sleepy green eyes. The other man was Henry Macy, a shy and timid person with gentle manners and nervous ways, who sat on the edge of the bottom step. Miss Amelia herself stood leaning against the side of the open door, her feet crossed in their big swamp boots, patiently untying knots in a rope she had come across. They had not talked for a long time.

One of the twins, who had been looking down the empty road, was the first to speak. "I see something coming," he said.

"A calf got loose," said his brother.

The approaching figure was still too distant to be clearly seen. The moon made dim, twisted shadows of the blossoming peach trees along the side of the road. In the air the odor of blossoms and sweet spring grass mingled with the warm, sour smell of the nearby lagoon.

"No. It's somebody's youngun," said Stumpy MacPhail.

Miss Amelia watched the road in silence. She had put down her rope and was fingering the straps of her overalls with her brown bony hand. She scowled and a dark lock of hair fell down on her forehead. While they were waiting there, a dog from one of the houses down the road began a wild, hoarse howl that continued until a voice called out and hushed him. It was not until the figure was quite close, within the range of the yellow light from the porch, that they saw clearly what had come.

The man was a stranger, and it is rare that a stranger enters the town on foot at that hour. Besides, the man was a hunchback. He was scarcely more than four feet tall and he wore a ragged, dusty coat that reached only to his knees. His crooked little legs seemed too thin to carry the weight of his great warped chest and the hump that sat on his shoulders. He had a very large head, with deep-set blue eyes and a sharp little mouth. His face was both soft and sassy—at

The Ballad of the Sad Café

the moment his pale skin was yellowed by dust and there were lavender shadows beneath his eyes. He carried a lopsided old suitcase which was tied with a rope.

"Evening," said the hunchback, and he was out of breath.

Miss Amelia and the men on the porch neither answered his greeting nor spoke. They only looked at him.

"I am hunting for Miss Amelia Evans."

Miss Amelia pushed back her hair from her forehead and raised her chin. "How come?"

"Because I am kin to her," the hunchback said.

The twins and Stumpy MacPhail looked up at Miss Amelia.

"That's me," she said. "How do you mean 'kin'?"

"Because—" the hunchback began. He looked uneasy, almost as though he was about to cry. He rested the suitcase on the bottom step, but did not take his hand from the handle. "My mother was Fanny Jesup and she come from Cheehaw. She left Cheehaw some thirty years ago when she married her first husband. I remember hearing her tell how she had a half-sister named Martha. And back in Cheehaw today they tell me that was your mother."

Miss Amelia listened with her head turned slightly aside. She ate her Sunday dinners by herself; her place was never crowded with a flock of relatives, and she claimed kin with no one. She had had a great-aunt who owned the livery stable in Cheehaw, but that aunt was now dead. Aside from her there was only one double first cousin who lived in a town twenty miles away, but this cousin and Miss Amelia did not get on so well and when they chanced to pass each other they spat on the side of the road. Other people had tried very hard, from time to time, to work out some kind of farfetched connection with Miss Amelia, but with absolutely no success.

The hunchback went into a long rigmarole, mentioning names and places that were unknown to the listeners on the porch and seemed to have nothing to do with the subject, "So Fanny and Martha Jesup were half-sisters. And I am the son of Fanny's third husband. So that would make you and I—" He bent down and began to unfasten his suitcase. His hands were like dirty sparrow claws and they were

Kay Boyle

trembling. The bag was full of all manner of junk—ragged clothes and odd rubbish that look like parts out of a sewing machine or something just as worthless. The hunchback scrambled among these belongings and brought out an old photograph. "This is a picture of my mother and her half-sister."

Miss Amelia did not speak. She was moving her jaw slowly from side to side, and you could tell from her face what she was thinking about. Stumpy MacPhail took the photograph and held it out toward the light. It was a picture of two pale, withered-up little children of about two and three years of age. The faces were tiny white blurs, and it might have been an old picture in anyone's album.

Stumpy MacPhail handed it back with no comment. "Where you come from?" he asked.

The hunchback's voice was uncertain. "I was traveling."

Still Miss Amelia did not speak. She just stood leaning against the side of the door and looked down at the hunchback. Henry Macy winked nervously and rubbed his hands together. Then quietly he left the bottom step and disappeared. He is a good soul and the hunchback's situation had touched his heart. Therefore he did not want to wait and watch Miss Amelia chase this newcomer off her property and run him out of town. The hunchback stood with his bag open on the bottom step, he sniffled his nose, and his mouth quivered. Perhaps he began to feel his dismal predicament. Maybe he realized what a miserable thing it was to be a stranger in the town with only a suitcase full of junk, and claiming kin with Miss Amelia. At any rate he sat down on the steps and suddenly began to cry.

It was not a common thing to have an unknown hunchback walk to the store at midnight and then sit down and cry. Miss Amelia rubbed back her hair from her forehead and the men looked at each other uncomfortably. All around the town was very quiet.

At last one of the twins said: "I'll be damned if he ain't a regular Morris Finestein."

Everyone nodded and agreed, for that is an expression having a certain special meaning. But the hunchback cried louder because he could not know what they were talking about. Morris Finestein was

The Ballad of the Sad Café

a person who had lived in the town years before. He was only a quick, skipping little Jew who cried if you called him Christ-killer and ate light bread and canned salmon every day. A calamity had come over him and he had moved away to Society City. But since then if a man were prissy in any way, or if a man ever wept, he was known as a Morris Finestein. Some times Henry Macy was referred to as a Morris Finestein.

"Well, he is afflicted," said Stumpy MacPhail. "There is some cause."

Miss Amelia crossed the porch with two slow, gangling strides. She went down the steps and stood looking thoughtfully at the stranger. Gingerly, with one long brown forefinger, she touched the hump on his back. The hunchback still wept, but he was quieter now. The night was silent and the moon still shone with a soft, clear light—it was getting colder. Then Miss Amelia did a rare thing; she pulled out a bottle from her hip pocket and after polishing off the top with the palm of her hand she handed it to the hunchback to drink. Miss Amelia could seldom be persuaded to sell her liquor on credit, and for her to give so much as a drop away free was almost unknown.

"Drink," she said. "It will liven your gizzard."

The hunchback stopped crying, neatly licked the tears from around his mouth, and did as he was told. When he was finished, Miss Amelia took a slow swallow, warmed and washed her mouth with it, and spat. Then she also drank. The twins and the foreman had their own bottle they had paid for.

"It is smooth liquor," Stumpy MacPhail said. "Miss Amelia, I have never known you to fail."

The whisky they drank that evening (two big bottles of it) is important. Otherwise it would be hard to account for what followed. Perhaps without it there would never have been a café. For the liquor of Miss Amelia has a special quality of its own. It is clean and sharp on the tongue, but once down a man it glows inside him for a long time afterward. And that is not all. It is known that if a message is written with lemon juice on a clean sheet of paper there will be no

Kay Boyle

sign of it. But if the paper is held for a moment to the fire then the letters turn brown and the meaning becomes clear. Imagine that the whisky is the fire and that the message is that which is known only in the soul of a man—then the worth of Miss Amelia's liquor can be understood. Things that have gone unnoticed, thoughts that have been harbored far back in the dark mind, are suddenly recognized and comprehended. A spinner who has thought only of the loom, the dinner pail, the bed, and then the loom again—this spinner might drink some on a Sunday and come across a marsh lily. And in his palm he might hold this flower, examining the golden dainty cup, and in him suddenly might come a sweetness keen as pain. A weaver might look up suddenly and see for the first time the cold, weird radiance of midnight January sky, and a deep fright at his own smallness stop his heart. Such things as these, then, happen when a man has drunk Miss Amelia's liquor. He may suffer or he may be spent with joy—but the experience has shown the truth; he has warmed his soul and seen the message hidden there.

They drank until it was past midnight and the moon was clouded over so that the night was cold and dark. The hunchback still sat on the bottom steps, bent over miserably with his forehead resting on his knee. Miss Amelia stood with her hands in her pockets, one foot resting on the second step of the stairs. She had been silent for a long time. Her face had the expression often seen in slightly cross-eyed persons who are thinking deeply, a look that appears to be both very wise and very crazy. At last she said: "I don't know your name."

"I'm Lymon Willis," said the hunchback.

"Well, come on in," she said. "Some supper was left in the stove and you can eat."

Only a few times in her life had Miss Amelia invited anyone to eat with her, unless she were planning to trick them in some way or make money out of them. So the men on the porch felt there was something wrong. Later they said among themselves that she must have been drinking back in the swamp the better part of the afternoon. At any rate she left the porch, and Stumpy MacPhail and the twins went on off home. She bolted the front door and looked all

The Ballad of the Sad Café

around to see that her goods were in order. Then she went to the kitchen which was at the back of the store. The hunchback followed her, dragging his suitcase, sniffling and wiping his nose on the sleeve of his dirty coat.

"Sit down," said Miss Amelia, "I'll just warm up what's here."

It was a good meal they had together on that night. Miss Amelia was rich and she did not begrudge herself food. There was fried chicken (the breast of which the hunchback took on his own plate), mashed rootabeggars, collard greens, and hot, pale golden sweet potatoes. Miss Amelia ate slowly and with the relish of a farm hand. She sat with both elbows on the table, bent over the plate, her knees spread wide apart and her feet braced on the rungs of the chair. As for the hunchback he gulped down his supper as though he had not smelled food in months. During the meal one tear crept down his dingy cheek—but it was just a little leftover tear and meant nothing at all. The lamp on the table was well-trimmed, burning blue at the edges of the wick, and casting a cheerful light in the kitchen. When Miss Amelia had eaten her supper she wiped her plate carefully with a slice of light bread and then poured her own clear, sweet syrup over the bread. The hunchback did likewise—except that he was more finicky and asked for a new plate. Having finished, Miss Amelia tilted back her chair, tightened her fist, and felt the hard, supple muscles of her right arm beneath the clean, blue cloth of her shirt-sleeves—an unconscious habit with her, at the close of a meal. Then she took the lamp from the table and jerked her head toward the staircase as an invitation for the hunchback to follow after her.

Above the store there were the three rooms where Miss Amelia had lived during all her life—two bedrooms with a large parlor in between. Few people had ever seen these rooms, but it was generally known that they were well-furnished and extremely clean. And now Miss Amelia was taking up with her a dirty, little hunchbacked stranger, come from God knows where. Miss Amelia walked slowly, two steps at a time, holding the lamp high. The hunchback hovered so close behind her that the swinging light made on the staircase wall

Kay Boyle

one great, twisted shadow of the two of them. Soon the premises above the store were dark as the rest of the town.

The next morning was serene, with a sunrise of warm purple mixed with rose. In the fields around the town the furrows were newly plowed, and very early the tenants were at work setting out the young, deep green tobacco plants. The wild crows flew down close to the fields, making swift blue shadows on the earth. In town the people set out early with their dinner pails, and the windows of the mill were blinding gold in the sun. The air was fresh and the peach trees light as March clouds with their blossoms.

Miss Amelia came down at about dawn, as usual. She washed her head at the pump and very shortly set about her business. Later in the morning she saddled her mule and went to see about her property, planted with cotton, up near the Forks Falls Road. By noon, of course, everybody had heard about the hunchback who had come to the store in the middle of the night. But no one as yet had seen him. The day soon grew hot and the sky was a rich, midday blue. Still no one had laid an eye on this strange guest. A few people remembered that Miss Amelia's mother had had a half-sister—but there was some difference of opinion as to whether she had died or had run off with a tobacco stringer. As for the hunchback's claim, everyone thought it was a trumped-up business. And the town, knowing Miss Amelia, decided that surely she had put him out of the house after feeding him. But toward evening, when the sky had whitened and the shift was done, a woman claimed to have seen a crooked face at the window of one of the rooms up over the store. Miss Amelia herself said nothing. She clerked in the store for a while, argued for an hour with a farmer over a plow shaft, mended some chicken wire, locked up near sundown, and went to her rooms. The town was left puzzled and talkative.

The next day Miss Amelia did not open the store, but stayed locked up inside her premises and saw no one. Now this was the day that the rumor started—the rumor so terrible that the town and all the county about were stunned by it. The rumor was started by a weaver called Merlie Ryan. He is a man of not much account—

The Ballad of the Sad Café

sallow, shambling, and with no teeth in his head. He has the three-day malaria, which means that every third day the fever comes on him. So on two days he is dull and cross, but on the third day he livens up and sometimes has an idea or two, most of which are foolish. It was while Merlie Ryan was in his fever that he turned suddenly and said:

“I know what Miss Amelia done. She murdered that man for something in that suitcase.”

He said this in a calm voice, as a statement of fact. And within an hour the news had swept through the town. It was a fierce and sickly tale the town built up that day. In it were all the things which cause the heart to shiver—a hunchback, a midnight burial in the swamp, the dragging of Miss Amelia through the streets of the town on the way to prison, the squabbles over what would happen to her property—all told in hushed voices and repeated with some fresh and weird detail. It rained and women forgot to bring in the washing from the lines. One or two mortals, who were in debt to Miss Amelia, even put on Sunday clothes as though it were a holiday. People clustered together on the main street, talking and watching the store.

It would be untrue to say that all the town took part in this evil festival. There were a few sensible men who reasoned that Miss Amelia, being rich, would not go out of her way to murder a vagabond for a few trifles of junk. In the town there were even three good people and they did not want this crime, not even for the sake of the interest and the great commotion it would entail; it gave them no pleasure to think of Miss Amelia holding to the bars of the penitentiary and being electrocuted in Atlanta. These good people judged Miss Amelia in a different way from what the others judged her. When a person is as contrary in every single respect as she was, and when the sins of a person have mounted to such a point that they can hardly be remembered all at once—then this person plainly requires a special judgment. They remembered that Miss Amelia had been born dark and somewhat queer of face, raised motherless by her father who was a solitary man, that early in youth she had grown to

Kay Boyle

be six feet two inches tall which in itself is not natural for a woman, and that her ways and habits of life were too peculiar ever to reason about. Above all they remembered her puzzling marriage, which was the most unreasonable scandal ever to happen in this town.

So these good people felt toward her something near to pity. And when she was out on her wild business, such as rushing in a house to drag forth a sewing machine in payment for a debt, or getting herself worked up over some matter concerning the law—they had toward her a feeling which was a mixture of exasperation, a ridiculous little inside tickle, and a deep, unnamable sadness. But enough of the good people, for there were only three of them; the rest of the town was making a holiday of this fancied crime the whole of the afternoon.

Miss Amelia herself, for some strange reason, seemed unaware of all of this. She spent most of her day upstairs. When down in the store, she prowled around peacefully, her hands deep in the pockets of her overalls and head bent so low that her chin was tucked inside the collar of her shirt. There was no bloodstain on her anywhere. Often she stopped and just stood somberly looking down at the cracks in the floor, twisting a lock of her short-cropped hair, and whispering something to herself. But most of the day was spent upstairs.

Dark came on. The rain that afternoon had chilled the air, so that the evening was bleak and gloomy as in wintertime. There were no stars in the sky, and a light, icy drizzle had set in. The lamps in the houses made mournful, wavering flickers when watched from the street. A wind had come up, not from the swamp side of the town but from the cold, black pinewoods to the north.

The clocks in the town struck eight. Still nothing had happened. The bleak night, after the gruesome talk of the day, put a fear in some people, and they stayed home close to the fire. Others were gathered in groups together. Some eight or ten men had convened on the porch of Miss Amelia's store. They were silent and were indeed just waiting about. They themselves did not know what they were waiting for, but it was this: in times of tension, when some

The Ballad of the Sad Café

great action is impending, men gather and wait in this way. And after a time there will come a moment when all together they will act in unison, not from thought or from the will of any one man, but as though their instincts had merged together so that the decision belongs to no single one of them but to the group as a whole. At such a time no individual hesitates. And whether the matter will be settled peaceably, or whether the joint action will result in ransacking, violence, and crime, depends on destiny. So the men waited soberly on the porch of Miss Amelia's store, not one of them realizing what they would do, but knowing inwardly that they must wait, and that the time had almost come.

Now the door to the store was open. Inside it was bright and natural-looking. To the left was the counter where slabs of white meat, rock candy, and tobacco were kept. Behind this were shelves of salted white meat and meal. The right side of the store was mostly filled with farm implements and such. At the back of the store, to the left, was the door leading up the stairs, and it was open. And at the far right of the store there was another door which led to a little room that Miss Amelia called her office. This door was also open. And at eight o'clock that evening Miss Amelia could be seen there sitting before her rolltop desk, figuring with a fountain pen and some pieces of paper.

The office was cheerfully lighted, and Miss Amelia did not seem to notice the delegation on the porch. Everything around her was in great order, as usual. This office was a room well-known, in a dreadful way, throughout the country. It was there Miss Amelia transacted all business. On the desk was a carefully covered typewriter which she knew how to run but used only for the most important documents. In the drawers were literally thousands of papers, all filed according to the alphabet. This office was also the place where Miss Amelia received sick people, for she enjoyed doctoring and did a great deal of it. Two whole shelves were crowded with bottles and various paraphernalia. Against the wall was a bench where the patients sat. She could sew up a wound with a burnt needle so that it would not turn green. For burns she had a cool sweet syrup. For

Kay Boyle

unlocated sicknesses there were any number of different medicines which she had brewed herself from unknown recipes. They wrenched loose the bowels very well, but they could not be given to small children, as they caused bad convulsions; for them she had an entirely separate draft, gentler and sweet-flavored. Yes, all in all, she was considered a good doctor. Her hands, though very large and bony, had a light touch about them. She possessed great imagination and used hundreds of different cures. In the face of the most dangerous and extraordinary treatment she did not hesitate, and no disease was so terrible but what she would undertake to cure it. In this there was one exception. If a patient came with a female complaint she could do nothing. Indeed at the mere mention of the words her face would slowly darken with shame, and she would stand there craning her neck against the collar of her shirt or rubbing her swamp boots together, for all the world like a great, shamed, dumb-tongued child. But in other matters people trusted her. She charged no fees whatsoever and always had a raft of patients.

On this evening Miss Amelia wrote with her fountain pen a good deal. But even so she could not be forever unaware of the group waiting out there on the dark porch, and watching her. From time to time she looked up and regarded them steadily. But she did not holler out to them to demand why they were loafing around her property like a sorry bunch of gabbies. Her face was proud and stern, as it always was when she sat at the desk of her office. After a time their peering in like that seemed to annoy her. She wiped her cheek with a red handkerchief, got up, and closed the office door.

Now to the group on the porch this gesture acted as a signal. The time had come. They had stood for a long while with the night raw and gloomy in the street behind them. They had waited long and just at that moment the instinct to act came on them. All at once, as though moved by one will, they walked into the store. At that moment the eight men looked very much alike—all wearing blue overalls, most of them with whitish hair, all pale of face, and all with a set, dreaming look in the eye. What they would have done next no one knows. But at that instant there was a noise at the head

The Ballad of the Sad Café

of the staircase. The men looked up and then stood dumb with shock. It was the hunchback, whom they had already murdered in their minds. Also, the creature was not at all as he had been pictured to them—not a pitiful and dirty little chatterer, alone and beggared in this world. Indeed, he was like nothing any man among them had ever beheld until that time. The room was still as death.

The hunchback came down slowly with the proudness of one who owns every plank of the floor beneath his feet. In the past days he had greatly changed. For one thing he was clean beyond words. He still wore his little coat, but it was brushed off and neatly mended. Beneath this was a fresh red and black checkered shirt belonging to Miss Amelia. He did not wear trousers such as ordinary men are meant to wear, but a pair of tight-fitting little knee-length breeches. On his skinny legs he wore black stockings, and his shoes were of a special kind, being queerly shaped, laced up over the ankles, and newly cleaned and polished with wax. Around his neck, so that his large, pale ears were almost completely covered, he wore a shawl of lime green wool, the fringes of which almost touched the floor.

The hunchback walked down the store with his stiff little strut and then stood in the center of the group that had come inside. They cleared a space about him and stood looking with hands loose at their sides and eyes wide open. The hunchback himself got his bearings in an odd manner. He regarded each person steadily at his own eye level, which was about belt line for an ordinary man. Then with shrewd deliberation he examined each man's lower regions—from the waist to the sole of the shoe. When he had satisfied himself he closed his eyes for a moment and shook his head, as though in his opinion what he had seen did not amount to much. Then with assurance, only to re-confirm himself, he tilted back his head and took in the halo of faces around him with one long, circling stare. There was a half-filled sack of guano on the left side of the store, and when he had found his bearings in this way, the hunchback sat down upon it. Cozily settled, with his little legs crossed, he took from his coat pocket a certain object.

Now it took some moments for the men in the store to regain

Kay Boyle

their ease. Merlie Ryan, he of the three-day fever who had started the rumor that day, was the first to speak. He looked at the object which the hunchback was fondling and said in a hushed voice:

“What is it you have there?”

Each man knew well what it was the hunchback was handling. For it was the snuffbox which had belonged to Miss Amelia’s father. The snuffbox was of blue enamel with a dainty embellishment of wrought gold on the lid. The group knew it well and marveled. They glanced warily at the closed office door, and heard the low sound of Miss Amelia whistling to herself.

“Yes, what is it, Peanut?”

The hunchback looked up quickly and sharpened his mouth to speak. “Why, this is a lay-low to catch meddlers.”

The hunchback reached in the box with his scrambly little fingers and ate something, but he offered no one around him a taste. It was not even proper snuff which he was taking, but a mixture of sugar and cocoa. This he took, though, as snuff, pocketing a little wad of it beneath his lower lip and licking down neatly into this with a flick of his tongue which made a frequent grimace come over his face.

“The very teeth in my head have always tasted sour to me,” he said in explanation. “That is the reason why I take this kind of sweet snuff.”

The group still clustered around, feeling somewhat gawky and bewildered. This sensation never quite wore off, but it was soon tempered by another feeling—an air of intimacy in the room and a vague festivity. Now the names of the men of the group there on that evening were as follows: Hasty Malone, Robert Calvert Hale, Merlie Ryan, Reverend T. M. Willin, Rosser Cline, Rip Wellborn, Henry Ford Crimp, and Horace Wells. Except for Reverend Willin, they are all alike in many ways, as has been said—all having taken pleasure from something or other, all having wept and suffered in some way, most of them tractable unless exasperated. Each of them worked in the mill, and lived with others in a two- or three-room house for which the rent was ten dollars or twelve dollars a month. All had

The Ballad of the Sad Café

been paid that afternoon, for it was Saturday. So, for the present, think of them as a whole.

The hunchback, however, was already sorting them out in his mind. Once comfortably settled he began to chat with everyone, asking questions such as if a man was married, how old he was, how much his wages came to in an average week, et cetera—picking his way along to inquiries which were downright intimate. Soon the group was joined by others in the town, Henry Macy, idlers who had sensed something extraordinary, women come to fetch their men who lingered on, and even one loose, towhead child who tiptoed into the store, stole a box of animal crackers, and made off very quietly. So the premises of Miss Amelia were soon crowded and she herself had not yet opened her office door.

There is a type of person who has a quality about him that sets him apart from other and more ordinary human beings. Such a person has an instinct which is usually found only in small children, an instinct to establish immediate and vital contact between himself and all things in the world. Certainly the hunchback was of this type. He had only been in the store a half an hour before an immediate contact had been established between him and each other individual. It was as though he had lived in the town for years, was a well-known character, and had been sitting and talking there on that guano sack for countless evenings. This, together with the fact that it was Saturday night, could account for the air of freedom and illicit gladness in the store. There was a tension, also, partly because of the oddity of the situation and because Miss Amelia was still closed off in her office and had not yet made her appearance.

She came out that evening at ten o'clock. And those who were expecting some drama at her entrance were disappointed. She opened the door and walked in with her slow, gangling swagger. There was a streak of ink on one side of her nose and she had knotted the red handkerchief about her neck. She seemed to notice nothing unusual. Her gray, crossed eyes glanced over to the place where the hunchback was sitting, and for a moment lingered there. The rest of

Kay Boyle

the crowd in her store she regarded with only a peaceable surprise.

"Does anyone want waiting on?" she asked quietly.

There were a number of customers, because it was Saturday night, and they all wanted liquor. Now Miss Amelia had dug up an aged barrel only three days past and had siphoned it into bottles back by the still. This night she took the money from the customers and counted it beneath the bright light. Such was the ordinary procedure. But after this what happened was not ordinary. Always before it was necessary to go around to the dark back yard and there she would hand out your bottle through the kitchen door. There was no feeling of joy in the transaction. After getting his liquor the customer walked off into the night. Or, if his wife would not have it in the home, he was allowed to come back around to the front porch of the store and guzzle there or in the street. Now both the porch and the street before it were the property of Miss Amelia, and no mistake about it—but she did not regard them as her premises; the premises began at the front door and took in the entire inside of the building. There she had never allowed liquor to be opened or drunk by anyone but herself. Now for the first time she broke this rule. She went to the kitchen, with the hunchback close at her heels, and she brought back the bottles into the warm, bright store. More than that she furnished some glasses and opened two boxes of crackers so that they were there hospitably in a platter on the counter and anyone who wished could take one free.

She spoke to no one but the hunchback, and she only asked him in a somewhat harsh and husky voice: "Cousin Lymon, will you have yours straight or warmed in a pan with water on the stove?"

"If you please, Amelia," the hunchback said. (And since what time had anyone presumed to address Miss Amelia by her bare name, without a title of respect?—Certainly not her bridegroom and her husband of ten days. In fact, not since the death of her father, who for some reason had always called her Little, had anyone dared to address her in such a familiar way.) "If you please, I'll have it warmed."

Now this was the beginning of the café. It was as simple as that.

The Ballad of the Sad Café

Recall that the night was gloomy as in wintertime, and to have sat around the property outside would have made a sorry celebration. But inside there was company and a genial warmth. Someone had rattled up the stove in the rear, and those who bought bottles shared their liquor with friends. Several women were there and they had twists of licorice, a Nehi, or even a swallow of the whisky. The hunchback was still a novelty and his presence amused everyone. The bench in the office was brought in, together with several extra chairs. Other people leaned against the counter or made themselves comfortable on barrels and sacks. Nor did the opening of liquor on the premises cause any rambunctiousness, indecent giggles, or misbehavior whatsoever. On the contrary the company was polite even to the point of a certain timidness. For people in this town were then unused to gathering together for the sake of pleasure. They met to work in the mill. Or on Sunday there would be an all-day camp meeting—and though that is a pleasure, the intention of the whole affair is to sharpen your view of Hell and put into you a keen fear of the Lord Almighty. But the spirit of a café is altogether different. Even the richest, greediest old rascal will behave himself, insulting no one in a proper café. And poor people look about them gratefully and pinch up the salt in a dainty and modest manner. For the atmosphere of a proper café implies these qualities: fellowship, the satisfactions of the belly, and a certain gaiety and grace of behavior. This had never been told to the gathering in Miss Amelia's store that night. But they knew it of themselves, although never of course until that time had there been a café in the town.

Now the cause of all this, Miss Amelia, stood most of the evening in the doorway leading to the kitchen. Outwardly she did not seem changed at all. But there were many who noticed her face. She watched all that went on, but most of the time her eyes were fastened lonesomely on the hunchback. He strutted about the store, eating from his snuffbox, and being at once sour and agreeable. Where Miss Amelia stood, the light from the chinks of the stove cast a glow, so that her brown, long face was somewhat brightened. She seemed to be looking inward. There was in her expression both pain, perplexity,

Kay Boyle

and uncertain joy. Her lips were not so firmly set as usual, and she swallowed often. Her skin had paled and her large empty hands were sweating. Her look that night, then, was the lonesome look of the lover.

This opening of the café came to an end at midnight. Everyone said good-by to everyone else in a friendly fashion. Miss Amelia shut the front door of her premises but forgot to bolt it. Soon everything—the main street with its three stores, the mill, the houses—all the town in fact—was dark and silent. And so ended three days and nights in which had come an arrival of a stranger, an unholy holiday, and the start of the café.

Now time must pass. For the next four years are much alike. There are great changes, but these changes are brought about bit by bit, in simple steps which in themselves do not appear to be important. The hunchback continued to live with Miss Amelia. The café expanded in a gradual way. Miss Amelia began to sell her liquor by the drink, and some tables were brought into the store. There were customers every evening and on Saturday a great crowd. Miss Amelia began to serve fried catfish suppers at fifteen cents a plate. The hunchback cajoled her into buying a fine mechanical piano. Within two years, the place was a store no longer, but had been converted into a proper café, open every evening from six until twelve o'clock.

Each night the hunchback came down the stairs with the air of one who has a grand opinion of himself. He always smelled slightly of turnip greens, as Miss Amelia rubbed him night and morning with pot liquor to give him strength. She spoiled him to a point beyond reason, but nothing seemed to strengthen him: food only made his hump and his head grow larger while the rest of him remained weakly and deformed. Miss Amelia was the same in appearance. During the week she still wore swamp boots and overalls, but on Sunday she put on a dark red dress that hung on her in a most peculiar fashion. Her manners, however, and her way of life were greatly changed. She still loved a fierce lawsuit, but she was not so quick to cheat her fellow man and to exact cruel payments. Because the hunchback was so extremely sociable she even went about a

The Ballad of the Sad Café

little—to revivals, to funerals, and so forth. Her doctoring was as successful as ever, her liquor even finer than before if that were possible. The café itself proved profitable and was the only place of pleasure for many miles around.

So for the moment regard these years from random and disjointed views. See the hunchback marching in Miss Amelia's footsteps when on a red winter morning they set out for the pinewoods to hunt. See them working on her properties—with Cousin Lymon standing by and doing absolutely nothing, but quick to point out any laziness among the hands. On autumn afternoons they sat on the back steps chopping sugar cane. The glaring summer days they spent in the swamp where the water cypress is a deep black green, where beneath the tangled swamp trees there is a drowsy gloom. When the path leads through a bog or a stretch of blackened water see Miss Amelia bend down to let Cousin Lymon scramble on her back—and see her wading forward with the hunchback settled on her shoulders, clinging to her ears or to her broad proud forehead. Occasionally Miss Amelia cranked up the Ford which she had bought and treated Cousin Lymon to a picture-show in Cheehaw, or to some distant fair or cockfight; the hunchback took a passionate delight in spectacles. Of course they were in their café every evening. And late at night, or rather early in the morning, they would often sit for hours together by the fireplace in the parlor upstairs. For the hunchback was sickly at night and dreaded to lie looking into the dark. He had a deep fear of death. And Miss Amelia would not leave him by himself to suffer with this fright. It may even be reasoned that the growth of the café came about mainly on this account; it was a thing that brought him company and pleasure and that helped him through the night. So compose from such flashes an image of these years as a whole. And for a moment let it rest.

Now some explanation is due for all this behavior. The time has come to speak about love. For Miss Amelia loved Cousin Lymon. So much was clear to everyone. They lived in the same house together and were never seen apart. Therefore, according to Mrs. Stumpy MacPhail, a warty-nosed old busybody who is continually

Kay Boyle

moving her sticks of furniture from one part of the front room to another, according to her and to certain others these two were living in sin. If they were related, they were only a cross between first and second cousins, and even that could in no way be proved. Now of course Miss Amelia was a powerful blunderbuss of a person, more than six feet tall—and Cousin Lymon a weakly little hunchback reaching only to her waist. But so much the better for Mrs. Stumpy MacPhail and her cronies, for they and their kind glory in conjunc-tions which are ill-matched and pitiful. So let them be. The good people thought that if those two had found some satisfaction of the flesh between themselves then it was a matter concerning them and God alone. All sensible people agreed in their opinion about this conjecture—and their answer was a plain, flat *no*. What sort of thing, then, was this love?

First of all, love is a joint experience between two persons—but the fact that it is a joint experience does not mean that it is a similar experience to the two people involved. There are the lover and the beloved, but these two come from different countries. Often the beloved is only a stimulus for all the stored-up love which has lain quiet within the lover for a long time hitherto. And somehow every lover knows this. He feels in his soul that his love is a solitary thing. He comes to know a new, strange loneliness and it is this knowledge which makes him suffer. So there is only one thing for the lover to do. He must house his love within himself as best he can; he must create for himself a whole new inward world—a world intense and strange, complete in himself. Let it be added here that this lover about whom we speak need not necessarily be a young man saving for a wedding ring—this lover can be man, woman, child, or indeed any human creature on this earth.

Now the beloved can also be of any description. The most outlandish people can be the stimulus for love. A man may be a dodering great-grandfather and still love only a strange girl he saw in the streets of Cheehaw one afternoon two decades past. The preacher may love a fallen woman. The beloved may be treacherous, greasy-headed, and given to evil habits. Yes, and the lover may see

The Ballad of the Sad Café

this as clearly as anyone else—but that does not affect the evolution of his love one whit. A most mediocre person can be the object of a love which is wild, extravagant, and beautiful as the poison lilies of the swamp. A good man may be the stimulus for a love both violent and debased, or a jabbering madman may bring about in the soul of someone a tender and simple idyll. Therefore, the value and quality of any love is determined solely by the lover himself.

It is for this reason that most of us would rather love than be loved. Almost everyone wants to be the lover. And the curt truth is that, in a deep secret way, the state of being beloved is intolerable to many people. The beloved fears and hates the lover, and with the best of reasons. For the lover is forever trying to strip bare his beloved. The lover craves any possible relation with the beloved, even if this experience can cause him only pain.

It has been mentioned before that Miss Amelia was once married. And this curious episode might as well be accounted for at this point. Remember that it all happened long ago, and that it was Miss Amelia's only personal contact, before the hunchback came to her, with this phenomenon—love.

The town then was the same as it is now, except there were two stores instead of three and the peach trees along the street were more crooked and smaller than they are now. Miss Amelia was nineteen years old at the time, and her father had been dead many months. There was in the town at that time a loom-fixer named Marvin Macy. He was the brother of Henry Macy, although to know them you would never guess that those two could be kin. For Marvin Macy was the handsomest man in this region—being six feet one inch tall, hard-muscled, and with slow gray eyes and curly hair. He was well-off, made good wages, and had a gold watch which opened in the back to show a picture of a waterfall. From the outward and worldly point of view Marvin Macy was a fortunate fellow; he needed to bow and scrape to no one and always got just what he wanted. But from a more serious and thoughtful viewpoint Marvin Macy was not a person to be envied, for he was an evil character. His reputation was as bad, if not worse, than that of any young

Kay Boyle

man in the county. For years, when he was a boy, he had carried about with him the dried and salted ear of a man he had killed in a razor fight. He had chopped off the tails of squirrels in the pine-woods just to please his fancy, and in his left hip pocket he carried the forbidden marijuana weed to tempt those who were discouraged and drawn toward death. Yet in spite of his well-known reputation he was the beloved of many females in this region—and there were at the time several young girls, who were clean-haired and soft-eyed, with tender sweet little buttocks and charming ways. These gentle young girls he degraded and shamed. Then finally, at the age of twenty-two, this Marvin Macy chose Miss Amelia. That solitary, gangling, queer-eyed girl was the one he longed for. Nor did he want her because of her money, but solely out of love.

And love changed Marvin Macy. Before the time when he loved Miss Amelia it could almost be questioned if such a person had within him a heart and soul. Yet there is some explanation for the ugliness of his character, for Marvin Macy had had a hard beginning in this world. He was one of seven unwanted children whose parents could hardly be called parents at all; these parents were wild younguns who liked to fish and roam around the swamp. Their own children, and there was a new one almost every year, were only a nuisance to them. At night when they came home from the mill they would look at the children as though they did not know wherever they had come from. If the children cried they were beaten, and the first thing they learned in this world was to seek the darkest corner of the room and try to hide themselves as best they could. They were as thin as little white-haired ghosts and they did not speak, not even to each other. Finally they were abandoned by their parents altogether and left to the mercies of the town. It was a hard winter, with the mill closed down almost three months, and much misery everywhere. But this is not a town to let white orphans perish in the road before your eyes. So here is what came about: the eldest child, who was eight years old, walked into Cheehaw and disappeared—perhaps he took a freight train somewhere and went out into the world, nobody knows. Three other children were boarded out

The Ballad of the Sad Café

amongst the town, being sent around from one kitchen to another, and as they were delicate they died before Easter time. The last two children were Marvin Macy and Henry Macy, and they were taken into a home. There was a good woman in the town named Mrs. Mary Hale, and she took Marvin Macy and Henry Macy and loved them as her own. They were raised in her household and treated well.

But the hearts of small children are delicate organs. A cruel beginning in this world can twist them into curious shapes. The heart of a hurt child can shrink so that forever afterward it is hard and pitted as the seed of a peach. Or again, the heart of such a child may fester and swell until it is a misery to carry within the body, easily chafed and hurt by the most ordinary things. This last is what happened to Henry Macy, who is so opposite to his brother, is the kindest and gentlest man in town. He lends his wages to those who are unfortunate, and in the old days he used to care for children whose parents were at the café on Saturday nights. But he is a shy man, and he has the look of one who has a swollen heart and suffers. Marvin Macy, however, grew to be bold and fearless and cruel. His heart turned tough as the horns of Satan, and until the time when he loved Miss Amelia he brought to his brother and the good woman who raised him nothing but shame and trouble.

But love reversed the character of Marvin Macy. For two years he loved Miss Amelia, but he did not declare himself. He would stand near the door of her premises, his cap in his hand, his eyes meek and longing and misty gray. He reformed himself completely. He was good to his brother and foster mother and he saved his wages and learned thrift. Moreover, he reached out toward God. No longer did he lie around on the floor of the front porch all day Sunday, singing and playing his guitar; he attended church services and was present at all religious meetings. He learned good manners: he trained himself to rise and give his chair to a lady, and he quit swearing and fighting and using holy names in vain. So for two years he passed through this transformation and improved his character in every way. Then at the end of the two years he went one

Kay Boyle

evening to Miss Amelia, carrying a bunch of swamp flowers, a sack of chitterlins, and a silver ring—that night Marvin Macy declared himself.

And Miss Amelia married him. Later everyone wondered why. Some said it was because she wanted to get herself some wedding presents. Others believed it came about through the nagging of Miss Amelia's great-aunt in Cheehaw, who was a terrible old woman. Anyway she strode with great steps down the aisle of the church wearing her dead mother's bridal gown, which was of yellow satin and at least twelve inches too short for her. It was a winter afternoon and the clear sun shone through the ruby windows of the church and put a curious glow on the pair before the altar. As the marriage lines were read Miss Amelia kept making an odd gesture—she would rub the palm of her right hand down the side of her satin wedding gown. She was reaching for the pocket of her overalls, and being unable to find it her face became impatient, bored, and exasperated. At last when the lines were spoken and the marriage prayer was done Miss Amelia hurried out of the church, not taking the arm of her husband, but walking at least two paces ahead of him.

The church is no distance from the store so the bride and groom walked home. It is said that on the way Miss Amelia began to talk about some deal she had worked up with a farmer over a load of kindling wood. In fact she treated her groom in exactly the same manner she would have used with some customer who had come into the store to buy a pint from her. But so far all had gone decently enough; the town was gratified, as people had seen what this love had done to Marvin Macy and hoped that it might also reform his bride. At least they counted on the marriage to tone down Miss Amelia's temper, to put a bit of bride-fat on her, and to change her at last into a calculable woman.

They were wrong. The young boys who watched through the window on that night said that this is what actually happened: The bride and groom ate a grand supper prepared by Jeff, the old Negro who cooked for Miss Amelia. The bride took second servings of everything, but the groom picked with his food. Then the bride

The Ballad of the Sad Café

went about her ordinary business—reading the newspaper, finishing an inventory of the stock in the store, and so forth. The groom hung about in the doorway with a loose, foolish, blissful face and was not noticed. At eleven o'clock the bride took a lamp and went upstairs. The groom followed close behind her. So far all had gone decently enough, but what followed after was unholy.

Within half an hour Miss Amelia had stomped down the stairs in breeches and a khaki jacket. Her face had darkened so that it looked quite black. She slammed the kitchen door and gave it an ugly kick. Then she controlled herself. She poked up the fire, sat down, and put her feet up on the kitchen stove. She read the Farmer's Almanac, drank coffee, and had a smoke with her father's pipe. Her face was hard, stern, and had now whitened to its natural color. Sometimes she paused to jot down some information from the Almanac on a piece of paper. Toward dawn she went into her office and uncovered her typewriter, which she had recently bought and was only just learning how to run. That was the way in which she spent the whole of her wedding night. At daylight she went out to her yard as though nothing whatsoever had occurred and did some carpentering on a rabbit hutch which she had begun the week before and intended to sell somewhere.

A groom is in a sorry fix when he is unable to bring his well-loved bride to bed with him, and when the whole town knows it. Marvin Macy came down that day still in his wedding finery, and with a sick face. God knows how he had spent the night. He moped about the yard, watching Miss Amelia but keeping some distance away from her. Then toward noon an idea came to him and he went off in the direction of Society City. He returned with presents—an opal ring, a pink enamel doreen of the sort which was then in fashion, a silver bracelet with two hearts on it, and a box of candy which had cost two dollars and a half. Miss Amelia looked over these fine gifts and opened the box of candy, for she was hungry. The rest of the presents she judged shrewdly for a moment to sum up their value—then she put them in the counter out for sale. The night was spent in much the same manner as the preceding one—except that Miss

Kay Boyle

Amelia brought her feather mattress to make a pallet by the kitchen stove, and she slept fairly well.

Things went on like this for three days. Miss Amelia went about her business as usual and took great interest in some rumor that a bridge was to be built some ten miles down the road. Marvin Macy still followed her about around the premises and it was plain from his face how he suffered. Then on the fourth day he did an extremely simpleminded thing: he went to Cheehaw and came back with a lawyer. Then in Miss Amelia's office he signed over to her the whole of his worldly goods, which was ten acres of timberland which he had bought with the money he had saved. She studied the paper sternly to make sure there was no possibility of a trick and filed it soberly in the drawer of her desk. That afternoon Marvin Macy took a quart bottle of whisky and went with it alone out in the swamp while the sun was still shining. Toward evening he came in drunk, went up to Miss Amelia with wet wide eyes, and put his hand on her shoulder. He was trying to tell her something, but before he could open his mouth she had swung once with her fist and hit his face so hard that he was thrown back against the wall and one of his front teeth was broken.

The rest of this affair can only be mentioned in bare outline. After this first blow Miss Amelia hit him whenever he came within arm's reach of her, and whenever he was drunk. At last she turned him off the premises altogether and he was forced to suffer publicly. During the day he hung around just outside the boundary line of Miss Amelia's property and sometimes with a drawn crazy look he would fetch his rifle and sit there cleaning it, peering at Miss Amelia steadily. If she was afraid she did not show it, but her face was sterner than ever and often she spat on the ground. His last foolish effort was to climb in the window of her store one night and to sit there in the dark, for no purpose whatsoever, until she came down the stairs next morning. For this Miss Amelia set off immediately to the courthouse in Cheehaw with some notion that she could get him locked in the penitentiary for trespassing. Marvin Macy left the town that day, and no one saw him go or knew just where he went. On

The Ballad of the Sad Café

leaving he put a long curious letter, partly written in pencil and partly with ink, beneath Miss Amelia's door. It was a wild love letter—but in it were also included threats, and he swore that in this life he would get even with her. His marriage had lasted for ten days. And the town felt the special satisfaction that people feel when someone has been thoroughly done in by some scandalous and terrible means.

Miss Amelia was left with everything that Marvin Macy had ever owned—his timberwood, his gold watch, every one of his possessions. But she seemed to attach little value to them and that spring she cut up his Klansman's robe to cover her tobacco plants. So all that he had ever done was to make her richer and to bring her love. But, strange to say, she never spoke of him but with a terrible and spiteful bitterness. She never once referred to him by name but always mentioned him scornfully as "that loom-fixer I was married to."

And later, when horrifying rumors concerning Marvin Macy reached the town, Miss Amelia was very pleased. For the true character of Marvin Macy finally revealed itself, once he had freed himself of his love. He became a criminal whose picture and whose name were in all the papers in the state. He robbed three filling stations and held up the A & P store of Society City with a sawed-off gun. He was suspected of the murder of Slit Eye Sam who was a noted highjacker. All these crimes were connected with the name of Marvin Macy, so that his evil became famous through many counties. Then finally the law captured him, drunk on the floor of a tourist cabin, his guitar by his side, and fifty-seven dollars in his right shoe. He was tried, sentenced, and sent off to the penitentiary near Atlanta. Miss Amelia was deeply gratified.

Well, all this happened a long time ago, and it is the story of Miss Amelia's marriage. The town laughed a long time over this grotesque affair. But though the outward facts of this love are indeed sad and ridiculous, it must be remembered that the real story was that which took place in the soul of the lover himself. So who but God can be the final judge of this or any other love? On the very first night of the café there were several who suddenly thought of

Kay Boyle

this broken bridegroom, locked in the gloomy penitentiary, many miles away. And in the years that followed, Marvin Macy was not altogether forgotten in the town. His name was never mentioned in the presence of Miss Amelia or the hunchback. But the memory of his passion and his crimes, and the thought of him trapped in his cell in the penitentiary, was like a troubling undertone beneath the happy love of Miss Amelia and the gaiety of the café. So do not forget this Marvin Macy, as he is to act a terrible part in the story which is yet to come.

During the four years in which the store became a café the rooms upstairs were not changed. This part of the premises remained exactly as it had been all of Miss Amelia's life, as it was in the time of her father and most likely his father before him. The three rooms, it is already known, were immaculately clean. The smallest object had its exact place, and everything was wiped and dusted by Jeff, the servant of Miss Amelia, each morning. The front room belonged to Cousin Lymon—it was the room where Marvin Macy had stayed during the few nights he was allowed on the premises, and before that it was the bedroom of Miss Amelia's father. The room was furnished with a large chifforobe, a bureau covered with a stiff white linen cloth crocheted at the edges, and a marble-topped table. The bed was immense, an old four-poster made of carved, dark rosewood. On it were two feather mattresses, bolsters, and a number of hand-made comforts. The bed was so high that beneath it were two wooden steps—no occupant had ever used these steps before, but Cousin Lymon drew them out each night and walked up in state. Besides the steps, but pushed modestly out of view, there was a china chamberpot painted with pink roses. No rug covered the dark, polished floor and the curtains were of some white stuff, also crocheted at the edges.

On the other side of the parlor was Miss Amelia's bedroom, and it was smaller and very simple. The bed was narrow and made of pine. There was a bureau for her breeches, shirts and Sunday dress, and she had hammered two nails in the closet wall on which to hang

The Ballad of the Sad Café

her swamp boots. There were no curtains, rugs, or ornaments of any kind.

The large middle room, the parlor, was elaborate. The rosewood sofa, upholstered in threadbare green silk, was before the fireplace. Marble-topped tables, two Singer sewing machines, a big vase of pampas grass—everything was rich and grand. The most important piece of furniture in the parlor was a big, glass-doored cabinet in which was kept a large number of treasures and curios. Miss Amelia had added two objects to this collection—one was a large acorn from a water oak, the other a little velvet box holding two smallish, gray stones. Sometimes when she had nothing much to do, Miss Amelia would take out this velvet box and stand by the window with the stones in the palm of her hand, looking down at them with a mixture of fascination, dubious respect, and fear. They were the kidney stones of Miss Amelia herself and had been taken from her by the doctor in Cheehaw some years ago. It had been a terrible experience, from the first minute to the last, and all she had got out of it were those two little stones; she was bound to set great store by them or else admit to a mighty sorry bargain. So she kept them and in the second year of Cousin Lymon's stay with her she had them set as ornaments in a watch chain which she gave to him. The other object she had added to the collection, the large acorn, was precious to her—but when she looked at it her face was always saddened and perplexed.

"Amelia, what does it signify?" Cousin Lymon asked her.

"Why, it's just an acorn," she answered. "Just an acorn I picked up on the afternoon Big Papa died."

"How do you mean?" Cousin Lymon insisted.

"I mean it's just an acorn I spied on the ground that day. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. But I don't know why."

"What a peculiar reason to keep it," Cousin Lymon said.

The talks of Miss Amelia and Cousin Lymon in the rooms upstairs, usually in the first few hours of the morning when the hunchback could not sleep, were many. As a rule Miss Amelia was a silent woman, not letting her tongue run wild on any subject that hap-

Kay Boyle

pened to pop into her head. There were certain topics of conversation, however, in which she took pleasure. All these subjects had one point in common—they were interminable. She liked to contemplate problems which could be worked over for decades and still remain insoluble. Cousin Lymon, on the other hand, enjoyed talking on any subject whatsoever, as he was a great chatterer. Their approach to any conversation was altogether different. Miss Amelia always kept to the broad rambling generalities of the matter, going on endlessly in a low thoughtful voice and getting nowhere—while Cousin Lymon would interrupt her suddenly to pick up, magpie fashion, some detail which, even if unimportant, was at least concrete and bearing on some practical facet close at hand. Some of the favorite subjects of Miss Amelia were: the stars, the reason why Negroes are black, the best treatment for cancer, and so forth. Her father was also an interminable subject which was dear to her.

“Why, Law,” she would say to Lymon. “Those days I slept. I’d go to bed just as the lamp was turned on and sleep—why, I’d sleep like I was drowned in warm axle grease. Then come daybreak Big Papa would walk in and put his hand down on my shoulder. ‘Get stirring, Little,’ he would say. Then later he would holler up the stairs from the kitchen when the stove was hot. ‘Fried grits,’ he would holler. ‘White meat and gravy. Ham and eggs.’ And I’d run down the stairs and dress by the hot stove while he was out washing at the pump. Then off we’d go to the still or maybe—”

“The grits we had this morning was poor,” Cousin Lymon said. “Fried too quick so that the inside never heated.”

“And when Big Papa would run off the liquor in those days—” The conversation would go on endlessly, with Miss Amelia’s long legs stretched out before the hearth; for winter or summer there was always a fire in the grate, as Lymon was cold-natured. He sat in a low chair across from her, his feet not quite touching the floor and his torso usually well-wrapped in a blanket or the green wool shawl. Miss Amelia never mentioned her father to anyone else except Cousin Lymon.

That was one of the ways in which she showed her love for him.

The Ballad of the Sad Café

He had her confidence in the most delicate and vital matters. He alone knew where she kept the chart that showed where certain barrels of whisky were buried on a piece of property near by. He alone had access to her bankbook and the key to the cabinet of curios. He took money from the cash register, whole handfuls of it, and appreciated the loud jingle it made inside his pockets. He owned almost everything on the premises, for when he was cross Miss Amelia would prowl about and find him some present—so that now there was hardly anything left close at hand to give him. The only part of her life that she did not want Cousin Lymon to share with her was the memory of her ten-day marriage. Marvin Macy was the one subject that was never, at any time, discussed between the two of them.

So let the slow years pass and come to a Saturday evening six years after the time when Cousin Lymon came first to the town. It was August and the sky had burned above the town like a sheet of flame all day. Now the green twilight was near and there was a feeling of repose. The street was coated an inch deep with dry golden dust and the little children ran about half-naked, sneezed often, sweated, and were fretful. The mill had closed down at noon. People in the houses along the main street sat resting on their steps and the women had palmetto fans. At Miss Amelia's there was a sign at the front of the premises saying CAFÉ. The back porch was cool with latticed shadows and there Cousin Lymon sat turning the ice-cream freezer—often he unpacked the salt and ice and removed the dasher to lick a bit and see how the work was coming on. Jeff cooked in the kitchen. Early that morning Miss Amelia had put a notice on the wall of the front porch reading: Chicken Dinner—Twenty Cents Tonite. The café was already open and Miss Amelia had just finished a period of work in her office. All the eight tables were occupied and from the mechanical piano came a jingling tune.

In a corner, near the door and sitting at a table with a child, was Henry Macy. He was drinking a glass of liquor, which was unusual for him, as liquor went easily to his head and made him cry or sing. His face was very pale and his left eye worked constantly in a nerv-

Kay Boyle

ous tic, as it was apt to do when he was agitated. He had come into the café sidewise and silent, and when he was greeted he did not speak. The child next to him belonged to Horace Wells and he had been left at Miss Amelia's that morning to be doctored.

Miss Amelia came out of her office in good spirits. She attended to a few details in the kitchen and entered the café with the pope's nose of a hen between her fingers, as that was her favorite piece. She looked about the room, saw that in general all was well, and went over to the corner table by Henry Macy. She turned the chair around and sat straddling the back, as she only wanted to pass the time of day and was not yet ready for her supper. There was a bottle of Kroup Kure in the hip pocket of her overalls—a medicine made from whisky, rock candy, and a secret ingredient. Miss Amelia uncorked the bottle and put it to the mouth of the child. Then she turned to Henry Macy and, seeing the nervous winking of his left eye, she asked:

“What ails you?”

Henry Macy seemed on the point of saying something difficult, but after a long look into the eyes of Miss Amelia he swallowed and did not speak.

So Miss Amelia returned to her patient. Only the child's head showed above the table top. His face was very red, with the eyelids half-closed and the mouth partly open. He had a large, hard, swollen boil on his thigh, and had been brought to Miss Amelia so that it could be opened. But Miss Amelia used a special method with children; she did not like to see them hurt, struggling, and terrified. So she had kept the child around the premises all day, giving him licorice and frequent doses of the Kroup Kure, and toward evening she tied a napkin around his neck and let him eat his fill of the dinner. Now as he sat at the table his head wobbled slowly from side to side and sometimes as he breathed there came from him a little worn-out grunt.

There was a stir in the café and Miss Amelia looked around quickly. Cousin Lymon had come in. The hunchback strutted into the café as he did every night, and when he reached the exact center

The Ballad of the Sad Café

of the room he stopped short and looked shrewdly around him, summing up the people and making a quick pattern of the emotional material at hand that night. The hunchback was a great mischief-maker. He enjoyed any kind of to-do, and without saying a word he could set people at each other in a way that was miraculous. It was due to him that the Rainey twins had quarreled over a jackknife two years past, and had not spoken one word to each other since. He was present at the big fight between Rip Wellborn and Robert Calvert Hale, and every other fight for that matter since he had come into the town. He nosed around everywhere, knew the intimate business of everybody, and trespassed every waking hour. Yet, queerly enough, in spite of this it was the hunchback who was most responsible for the great popularity of the café. Things were never so gay as when he was around. When he walked into the room there was always a quick feeling of tension, because with this busybody about there was never any telling what might descend on you, or what might suddenly be brought to happen in the room. People are never so free with themselves and so recklessly glad as when there is some possibility of commotion or calamity ahead. So when the hunchback marched into the café everyone looked around at him and there was a quick outburst of talking and a drawing of corks.

Lymon waved his hand to Stumpy MacPhail who was sitting with Merlie Ryan and Henry Ford Crimp. "I walked to Rotten Lake today to fish," he said. "And on the way I stepped over what appeared at first to be a big fallen tree. But then as I stepped over I felt something stir and I taken this second look and there I was straddling this here alligator long as from the front door to the kitchen and thicker than a hog."

The hunchback chattered on. Everyone looked at him from time to time, and some kept track of his chattering and others did not. There were times when every word he said was nothing but lying and bragging. Nothing he said tonight was true. He had lain in bed with a summer quinsy all day long, and had only got up in the late afternoon in order to turn the ice-cream freezer. Everybody knew

Kay Boyle

this, yet he stood there in the middle of the café and held forth with such lies and boasting that it was enough to shrivel the ears.

Miss Amelia watched him with her hands in her pockets and her head turned to one side. There was a softness about her gray, queer eyes and she was smiling gently to herself. Occasionally she glanced from the hunchback to the other people in the café—and then her look was proud, and there was in it the hint of a threat, as though daring anyone to try to hold him to account for all his foolery. Jeff was bringing in the suppers, already served on the plates, and the new electric fans in the café made a pleasant stir of coolness in the air.

“The little youngun is asleep,” said Henry Macy finally.

Miss Amelia looked down at the patient beside her and composed her face for the matter in hand. The child’s chin was resting on the table edge and a trickle of spit or Kroup Kure had bubbled from the corner of his mouth. His eyes were quite closed and a little family of gnats had clustered peacefully in the corners. Miss Amelia put her hand on his head and shook it roughly, but the patient did not awake. So Miss Amelia lifted the child from the table, being careful not to touch the sore part of his leg, and went into the office. Henry Macy followed after her and they closed the office door.

Cousin Lymon was bored that evening. There was not much going on, and in spite of the heat the customers in the café were good-humored. Henry Ford Crimp and Horace Wells sat at the middle table with their arms around each other, sniggering over some long joke—but when he approached them he could make nothing of it as he had missed the beginning of the story. The moonlight brightened the dusty road, and the dwarfed peach trees were black and motionless: there was no breeze. The drowsy buzz of swamp mosquitoes was like an echo of the silent night. The town seemed dark, except far down the road to the right there was the flicker of a lamp. Somewhere in the darkness a woman sang in a high wild voice and the tune had no start and no finish and was made up of only three notes which went on and on and on. The hunchback stood leaning against

The Ballad of the Sad Café

the banister of the porch, looking down the empty road as though hoping that someone would come along.

There were footsteps behind him, then a voice: "Cousin Lymon, your dinner is set out upon the table."

"My appetite is poor tonight," said the hunchback, who had been eating sweet snuff all the day. "There is a sourness in my mouth."

"Just a pick," said Miss Amelia. "The breast, the liver, and the heart."

Together they went back into the bright café, and sat down with Henry Macy. Their table was the largest one in the café, and on it there was a bouquet of swamp lilies in a Coca-Cola bottle. Miss Amelia had finished with her patient and was satisfied with herself. From behind the closed office door there had come only a few sleepy whimpers, and before the patient could wake up and become terrified it was all over. The child was now slung across the shoulder of his father, sleeping deeply, his little arms dangling loose along his father's back and his puffed-up face very red—they were leaving the café to go home.

Henry Macy was still silent. He ate carefully, making no noise when he swallowed, and was not a third as greedy as Cousin Lymon who had claimed to have no appetite and was now putting down helping after helping of the dinner. Occasionally Henry Macy looked across at Miss Amelia and again seemed to be on the point of saying something. But he held his peace.

It was a typical Saturday night. An old couple who had come in from the country hesitated for a moment at the doorway, holding each other's hand, and finally decided to come inside. They had lived together so long, this old country couple, that they looked as similar as twins. They were brown, shriveled and like two little walking peanuts. They left early, and by midnight most of the other customers were gone. Rosser Cline and Merlie Ryan still played checkers, and Stumpy MacPhail sat with a liquor bottle on his table (his wife would not allow it in the home) and carried on peaceable conversations with himself. Henry Macy had not yet gone away, and this was unusual as he almost always went to bed soon after night-

Kay Boyle

fall. Miss Amelia yawned sleepily, but Lymon was restless and she did not suggest that they close up for the night.

Finally, at one o'clock, Henry Macy looked up at the corner of the ceiling and said quietly to Miss Amelia: "I got a letter today."

Miss Amelia was not one to be impressed by this, because all sorts of business letters and catalogues came addressed to her.

"I got a letter from my brother," said Henry Macy.

The hunchback, who had been goose-stepping about the café with his hands clasped behind his head, stopped suddenly. He was quick to sense any change in the atmosphere of a gathering. He glanced at each face in the room and waited.

Miss Amelia scowled and hardened her right fist. "You are welcome to it," she said.

"He is on parole. He is out of the penitentiary."

The face of Miss Amelia was very dark, and she shivered although the night was warm. Stumpy MacPhail and Merlie Ryan pushed aside their checker game. The café was very quiet.

"Who?" asked Cousin Lymon. His large, pale ears seemed to grow on his head and stiffen. "What?"

Miss Amelia slapped her hands palm down on the table. "Because Marvin Macy is a —" But her voice hoarsened and after a few moments she only said: "He belongs to be in that penitentiary the balance of his life."

"What did he do?" asked Cousin Lymon.

There was a long pause, as no one knew exactly how to answer this. "He robbed three filling stations," said Stumpy MacPhail. But his words did not sound complete and there was a feeling of sins left unmentioned.

The hunchback was impatient. He could not bear to be left out of anything, even a great misery. The name Marvin Macy was unknown to him, but it tantalized him as did any mention of subjects which others knew about and of which he was ignorant—such as any reference to the old sawmill that had been torn down before he came, or a chance word about poor Morris Finestein, or the recollection of any event that had occurred before his time. Aside from this inborn curi-

The Ballad of the Sad Café

osity the hunchback took a great interest in robbers and crimes of all varieties. As he strutted around the table he was muttering the words "released on parole" and "penitentiary" to himself. But although he questioned insistently, he was unable to find anything, as nobody would dare to talk about Marvin Macy before Miss Amelia in the café.

"The letter did not say very much," said Henry Macy. "He did not say where he was going."

"Humph!" said Miss Amelia, and her face was still hardened and very dark. "He will never set his split hoof on my premises."

She pushed back her chair from the table and made ready to close the café. Thinking about Marvin Macy may have set her to brooding, for she hauled the cash register back to the kitchen and put it in a private place. Henry Macy went off down the dark road. But Henry Ford Crimp and Merlie Ryan lingered for a time on the front porch. Later Merlie Ryan was to make certain claims, to swear that on that night he had a vision of what was to come. But the town paid no attention, for that was just the sort of thing that Merlie Ryan would claim. Miss Amelia and Cousin Lymon talked for a time in the parlor. And when at last the hunchback thought that he could sleep she arranged the mosquito netting over his bed and waited until he had finished with his prayers. Then she put on her long nightgown, smoked two pipes, and only after a long time went to sleep.

The autumn was a happy time. The crops around the countryside were good, and over at the Forks Falls market the price of tobacco held firm that year. After the long hot summer the first cool days had a clean bright sweetness. Goldenrod grew along the dusty roads and the sugar cane was ripe and purple. The bus came each day from Cheehaw to carry off a few of the younger children to the consolidated school to get an education. Boys hunted foxes in the pinewoods, winter quilts were aired out on the wash lines, and sweet potatoes bedded in the ground with straw against the colder months to come. In the evening delicate shreds of smoke rose from the chimneys and the moon was round and orange in the autumn sky. There is no still-

Kay Boyle

ness like the quiet of the first cold nights in the fall. Sometimes, late in the night when there was no wind, there could be heard in the town the thin wild whistle of the train that goes through Society City on its way far off to the North.

For Miss Amelia Evans this was a time of great activity. She was at work from dawn until sundown. She made a new and bigger condenser for her still and in one week ran off enough liquor to souse the whole county. Her old mule was dizzy from grinding so much sorghum, and she scalded her Mason jars and put away pear preserves. She was looking forward greatly to the first frost, because she had traded for three tremendous hogs, and intended to make much barbecue, chitterlins, and sausage.

During these weeks there was a quality about Miss Amelia that many people noticed. She laughed often, with a deep ringing laugh, and her whistling had a sassy, tuneful trickery. She was forever trying out her strength, lifting up heavy objects, or poking her tough biceps with her finger. One day she sat down to her typewriter and wrote a story—a story in which there were foreigners, trap doors, and millions of dollars. Cousin Lymon was with her always, traipsing along behind her coattails, and when she watched him her face had a bright, soft look, and when she spoke his name there lingered in her voice the undertone of love.

The first cold spell came at last. When Miss Amelia awoke one morning there were frost flowers on the window-pane and rime had silvered the patches of grass in the yard. Miss Amelia built a roaring fire in the kitchen stove, then went out of doors to judge the day. The air was cold and sharp, the sky pale green and cloudless. Very shortly people began to come in from the country to find out what Miss Amelia thought of the weather; she decided to kill the biggest hog, and word got round the countryside. The hog was slaughtered and a low oak fire started in the barbecue pit. There was the warm smell of pig blood and smoke in the back yard, the stamp of footsteps, the ring of voices in the winter air. Miss Amelia walked around giving orders and soon most of the work was done.

She had some particular business to do in Cheehaw that day, so

The Ballad of the Sad Café

after making sure that all was going well, she cranked up her car and got ready to leave. She asked Cousin Lymon to come with her, in fact she asked him seven times, but he was loath to leave the commotion and wanted to remain. This seemed to trouble Miss Amelia, as she always liked to have him near to her and was prone to be terribly homesick when she had to go any distance away. But after asking him seven times, she did not urge him any further. Before leaving she found a stick and drew a heavy line all around the barbecue pit, about two feet back from the edge, and told him not to trespass beyond that boundary. She left after dinner and intended to be back before dark.

Now it is not so rare to have a truck or an automobile pass along the road and through the town on the way from Cheehaw to somewhere else. Every year the tax collector comes to argue with rich people such as Miss Amelia. And if somebody in the town, such as Merlie Ryan, takes a notion that he can connive to get a car on credit, or to pay down three dollars and have a fine electric icebox such as they advertise in the store windows of Cheehaw, then a city man will come out asking meddlesome questions, finding out all his troubles, and ruining his chances of buying anything on the installment plan. Sometimes, especially since they are working on the Forks Falls highway, the cars hauling the chain gang come through the town. And frequently people in automobiles get lost and stop to inquire how they can find the right road again. So, late that afternoon it was nothing unusual to have a truck pass the mill and stop in the middle of the road near the café of Miss Amelia. A man jumped down from the back of the truck, and the truck went on its way.

The man stood in the middle of the road and looked about him. He was a tall man, with brown curly hair, and slow moving deep blue eyes. His lips were red and he smiled the lazy, half-mouthed smile of the braggart. The man wore a red shirt and wide belt of tooled leather, he carried a tin suitcase and a guitar. The first person in the town to see this newcomer was Cousin Lymon, who had heard the shifting of gears and come around to investigate. The hunchback stuck his head around the corner of the porch but did not step out

Kay Boyle

altogether into full view. He and the man stared at each other, and it was not the look of two strangers meeting for the first time and swiftly summing up each other. It was a peculiar stare they exchanged between them, like the look of two criminals who recognize each other. Then the man in the red shirt shrugged his left shoulder and turned away. The face of the hunchback was very pale as he watched the man go down the road, and after a few moments he began to follow along carefully, keeping many paces away.

It was immediately known throughout the town that Marvin Macy had come back again. First he went to the mill, propped his elbows lazily on a window sill and looked inside. He liked to watch others hard at work as do all born loafers. The mill was thrown into a sort of numb confusion. The dyers left the hot vats, the spinners and weavers forgot about their machines, and even Stumpy MacPhail, who was foreman, did not know exactly what to do. Marvin Macy still smiled his wet half-mouthing smiles, and when he saw his brother his bragging expression did not change. After looking over the mill Marvin Macy went down the road to the house where he had been raised and left his suitcase and guitar on the front porch. Then he walked around the millpond, looked over the church, the three stores, and the rest of the town. The hunchback trudged along quietly at some distance behind him, his hands in his pockets, and his little face still very pale.

It had grown late. The red winter sun was setting and to the west the sky was deep gold and crimson. Ragged chimney swifts flew to their nest; lamps were lighted. Now and then there was the smell of smoke, and the warm rich odor of the barbecue slowly cooking in the pit behind the café. After making the rounds of the town Marvin Macy stopped before Miss Amelia's premises and read the sign above the porch. Then, not hesitating to trespass, he walked through the side yard. The mill whistle blew a thin, lonesome blast, and the day's shift was done. Soon there were others in Miss Amelia's back yard beside Marvin Macy—Henry Ford Crimp, Merlie Ryan, Stumpy MacPhail, and any number of children and people who stood around the edges of the property and looked on. Very little was said. Marvin

The Ballad of the Sad Café

Macy stood by himself on one side of the pit and the rest of the people clustered together on the other side. Cousin Lymon stood somewhat apart from everyone, and he did not take his eyes from the face of Marvin Macy.

"Did you have a good time in the penitentiary?" asked Merlie Ryan with a silly giggle.

Marvin Macy did not answer. He took from his hip pocket a large knife, opened it slowly, and honed the blade on the seat of his pants. Merlie Ryan grew suddenly very quiet and went to stand directly behind the broad back of Stumpy MacPhail.

Miss Amelia did not come home until almost dark. They heard the rattle of her automobile while she was still a long distance away, then the slam of the door and bumping noise as though she were hauling something up the front steps of her premises. The sun had already set, and in the air there was the blue smoky glow of early winter evenings. Miss Amelia came down the back steps slowly, and the group in her yard waited very quietly. Few people in this world could stand up to Miss Amelia, and against Marvin Macy she had this special and bitter hate. Everyone waited to see her burst into a terrible holler, snatch up some dangerous object, and chase him altogether out of town. At first she did not see Marvin Macy and her face had the relieved and dreamy expression that was natural to her when she reached home after having gone some distance away.

Miss Amelia must have seen Marvin Macy and Cousin Lymon at the same instant. She looked from one to the other, but it was not the wastrel from the penitentiary on whom she finally fixed her gaze of sick amazement. She, and everyone else, was looking at Cousin Lymon, and he was a sight to see.

The hunchback stood at the end of the pit, his pale face lighted by the soft glow from the smoldering oak fire. Cousin Lymon had a very peculiar accomplishment, which he used whenever he wished to ingratiate himself with someone. He would stand very still, and with just a little concentration, he could wiggle his large pale ears with marvelous quickness and ease. This trick he always used when he wanted to get something special out of Miss Amelia, and

Kay Boyle

to her it was irresistible. Now as he stood there the hunchback's ears were wiggling furiously on his head but it was not Miss Amelia at whom he was looking this time. The hunchback was smiling at Marvin Macy with an entreaty that was near to desperation. At first Marvin Macy paid no attention to him, and when he did finally glance at the hunchback it was without any appreciation whatsoever.

"What ails this Brokeback?" he asked with a rough jerk of his thumb.

No one answered. And Cousin Lymon, seeing that his accomplishment was getting him nowhere, added new efforts of persuasion. He fluttered his eyelids, so that they were like pale trapped moths in his sockets. He scraped his feet around on the ground, waved his hands about, and finally began doing a little trotlike dance. In the last gloomy light of the winter afternoon he resembled the child of a swamp-hant.

Marvin Macy, alone of all the people in the yard, was unimpressed.

"Is the runt throwing a fit?" he asked, and when no one answered he stepped forward and gave Cousin Lymon a cuff on the side of his head. The hunchback staggered, then fell back on the ground. He sat where he had fallen, still looking up at Marvin Macy, and with great effort his ears managed one last forlorn little flap.

Now everyone turned to Miss Amelia to see what she would do. In all these years no one had so much as touched a hair of Cousin Lymon's head, although many had had the itch to do so. If anyone even spoke crossly to the hunchback, Miss Amelia would cut off this rash mortal's credit and find ways of making things go hard for him a long time afterward. So now if Miss Amelia had split open Marvin Macy's head with the ax on the back porch no one would have been surprised. But she did nothing of the kind.

There were times when Miss Amelia seemed to go into a sort of trance. And the cause of these trances was usually known and understood. For Miss Amelia was a fine doctor, and did not grind up swamp roots and other untried ingredients and give them to the first patient who came along; whenever she invented a new medicine she

The Ballad of the Sad Café

always tried it first on herself. She would swallow an enormous dose and spend the following day walking thoughtfully back and forth from the café to the brick privy. Often, when there was a sudden keen gripe, she would stand quite still, her queer eyes staring down at the ground and her fists clenched; she was trying to decide which organ was being worked upon and what misery the new medicine might be most likely to cure. And now as she watched the hunchback and Marvin Macy, her face wore this same expression, tense with reckoning some inward pain, although she had taken no new medicine that day.

"That will learn you, Brokeback," said Marvin Macy.

Henry Macy pushed back his limp whitish hair from his forehead and coughed nervously. Stumpy MacPhail and Merlie Ryan shuffled their feet, and the children and black people on the outskirts of the property made not a sound. Marvin Macy folded the knife he had been honing, and after looking about him fearlessly he swaggered out of the yard. The embers in the pit were turning to gray feathery ashes and it was not quite dark.

That was the way Marvin Macy came back from the penitentiary. Not a living soul in all the town was glad to see him. Even Mrs. Mary Hale, who was a good woman and had raised him with love and care—at the first sight of him even this old foster mother dropped the skillet she was holding and burst into tears. But nothing could faze that Marvin Macy. He sat on the back steps of the Hale house, lazily picking his guitar, and when the supper was ready he pushed the children of the household out of the way and served himself a big meal, although there had been barely enough hoecakes and white meat to go round. After eating he settled himself in the best and warmest sleeping place in the front room and was untroubled by dreams.

Miss Amelia did not open the café that night. She locked the doors and all the windows very carefully, nothing was seen of her and Cousin Lymon, and a lamp burned in her room all the night long.

Marvin Macy brought with him bad fortune, right from the first,

Kay Boyle

as could be expected. The next day the weather turned suddenly, and it became hot. Even in the early morning there was a sticky sultriness in the atmosphere, the wind carried the rotten smell of the swamp, and delicate shrill mosquitoes webbed the green millpond. It was unseasonable, worse than August, and much damage was done. For nearly everyone in the county who owned a hog had copied Miss Amelia and slaughtered the day before. And what sausage could keep in such weather as this? After a few days there was everywhere the smell of slowly spoiling meat, and an atmosphere of dreary waste. Worse yet, a family reunion near the Forks Falls highway ate pork roast and died, every one of them. It was plain that their hog had been infected—and who could tell whether the rest of the meat was safe or not. People were torn between the longing for the good taste of pork, and the fear of death. It was a time of waste and confusion.

The cause of all this, Marvin Macy, had no shame in him. He was seen everywhere. During work hours he loafed about the mill, looking in at the windows, and on Sundays he dressed in his red shirt and paraded up and down the road with his guitar. He was still handsome—with his brown hair, his red lips, and his broad strong shoulders; but the evil in him was now too famous for his looks to get him anywhere. And this evil was not measured only by the actual sins he had committed. True, he had robbed those filling stations. And before that he had ruined the tenderest girls in the county and laughed about it. Any number of wicked things could be listed against him, but quite apart from these crimes there was about him a secret meanness that clung to him almost like a smell. Another thing—he never sweated, not even in August, and that surely is a sign worth pondering over.

Now it seemed to the town that he was more dangerous than he had ever been before, as in the penitentiary in Atlanta he must have learned the method of laying charms. Otherwise how could his effect on Cousin Lymon be explained. For since first setting eyes on Marvin Macy the hunchback was possessed by an unnatural spirit. Every minute he wanted to be following along behind this jailbird, and he was full of silly schemes to attract attention to himself. Still Marvin

The Ballad of the Sad Café

Macy either treated him hatefully or failed to notice him at all. Sometimes the hunchback would give up, perch himself on the bannister of the front porch much as a sick bird huddles on a telephone wire, and grieve publicly.

"But why?" Miss Amelia would ask, staring at him with her crossed, gray eyes, and her fists closed tight.

"Oh, Marvin Macy," groaned the hunchback, and the sound of the name was enough to upset the rhythm of his sobs so that he hiccuped. "He has been to Atlanta."

Miss Amelia would shake her head and her face was dark and hardened. To begin with she had no patience with any traveling; those who had made the trip to Atlanta or traveled fifty miles from home to see the ocean—those restless people she despised. "Going to Atlanta does no credit to him."

"He has been to the penitentiary," said the hunchback, miserable with longing.

How are you going to argue against such envies as these? In her perplexity Miss Amelia did not herself sound any too sure of what she was saying. "Been to the penitentiary, Cousin Lymon? Why, a trip like that is no travel to brag about."

During these weeks Miss Amelia was closely watched by everyone. She went about absent-mindedly, her face remote as though she had lapsed into one of her gripe trances. For some reason, after the day of Marvin Macy's arrival, she put aside her overalls and wore always the red dress she had before this time reserved for Sundays, funerals, and sessions of the court. Then as the weeks passed she began to take some steps to clear up the situation. But her efforts were hard to understand. If it hurt her to see Cousin Lymon follow Marvin Macy about the town why did she not make the issues clear once and for all, and tell the hunchback that if he had dealings with Marvin Macy she would turn him off the premises? That would have been simple, and Cousin Lymon would have had to submit to her or else face the sorry business of finding himself loose in the world. But Miss Amelia seemed to have lost her will; for the first time in her life she hesitated as to just what course to pursue. And,

Kay Boyle

like most people in such a position of uncertainty, she did the worst thing possible—she began following several courses at once, all of them contrary to each other.

The café was opened every night as usual, and strangely enough when Marvin Macy came swaggering through the door, with the hunchback at his heels, she did not turn him out. She even gave him free drinks and smiled at him in a wild crooked way. At the same time she set a terrible trap for him out in the swamp that surely would have killed him if he had got caught. She let Cousin Lymon invite him to Sunday dinner, and then tried to trip him up as he went down the steps. She began a great campaign of pleasure for Cousin Lymon—making exhausting trips to various spectacles being held in distant places, driving the automobile thirty miles to a Chautauqua, taking him to Forks Falls to watch a parade. All in all it was a distracting time for Miss Amelia. In the opinion of most people she was well on her way in the climb up fool's hill, and everyone waited to see how it would all turn out.

The weather turned cold again, the winter was upon the town, and night came before the last shift in the mill was done. Children kept on all their garments when they slept, and women raised the backs of their skirts to toast themselves dreamily at the fire. After it rained, the mud in the road made hard frozen ruts, there were faint flickers of lamp light from the windows of the houses, the peach trees were scrawny and bare. In the dark, silent nights of wintertime the café was the warm center point of the town, the lights shining so brightly that they could be seen a quarter of a mile away. The great iron stove at the back of the room roared, crackled, and turned red. Miss Amelia had made red curtains for the windows, and from a salesman who passed through the town she bought a great bunch of paper roses that looked very real.

But it was not only the warmth, the decorations, and the brightness that made the café what it was. There is a deeper reason why the café was so precious to this town. And this deeper reason has to do with a certain pride that had not hitherto been known in these parts. To understand this new pride the cheapness of human life

The Ballad of the Sad Café

must be kept in mind. There were always plenty of people clustered around a mill—but it was seldom that every family had enough meal, garments, and fat back to go the rounds. Life could become one long dim scramble just to get the things needed to keep alive. And the confusing point is this: All useful things have a price, and are bought only with money, as that is the way the world is run. You know without having to reason about it the price of a bale of cotton, or a quart of molasses. But no value has been put on human life; it is given to us free and taken without being paid for. What is it worth? If you look around, at times the value may seem to be little or nothing at all. Often after you have sweated and tried and things are not better for you, there comes a feeling deep down in the soul that you are not worth much.

But the new pride that the café brought to this town had an effect on almost everyone, even the children. For in order to come to the café you did not have to buy the dinner or a portion of liquor. There were cold bottled drinks for a nickel. And if you could not even afford that, Miss Amelia had a drink called Cherry Juice which sold for a penny a glass, and was pink-colored and very sweet. Almost everyone, with the exception of Reverend T. M. Willin, came to the café at least once during the week. Children love to sleep in houses other than their own, and to eat at a neighbor's table; on such occasions they behave themselves decently and are proud. The people in the town were likewise proud when sitting at the tables in the café. They washed before coming to Miss Amelia's, and scraped their feet very politely on the threshold as they entered the café. There, for a few hours at least, the deep bitter knowing that you are not worth much in this world could be laid low.

The café was a special benefit to bachelors, unfortunate people, and consumptives. And here it may be mentioned that there was some reason to suspect that Cousin Lymon was consumptive. The brightness of his gray eyes, his insistence, his talkativeness, and his cough—these were all signs. Besides, there is generally supposed to be some connection between a hunched spine and consumption. But whenever this subject had been mentioned to Miss Amelia she had

Kay Boyle

become furious; she denied these symptoms with bitter vehemence, but on the sly she treated Cousin Lymon with hot chest plasters, Kroup Kure, and such. Now this winter the hunchback's cough was worse, and sometimes even on cold days he would break out in a heavy sweat. But this did not prevent him from following along after Marvin Macy.

Early every morning he left the premises and went to the back door of Mrs. Hale's house, and waited and waited—as Marvin Macy was a lazy sleeper. He would stand there and call out softly. His voice was just like the voices of children who squat patiently over those tiny little holes in the ground where doodlebugs are thought to live, poking the hole with a broom straw, and calling plaintively: "Doodlebug Doodlebug—fly away home. Mrs. Doodlebug. Mrs. Doodlebug. Come out, come out. Your house is on fire and all your children are burning up." In just such a voice—at once sad, luring, and resigned—would the hunchback call Marvin Macy's name each morning. Then when Marvin Macy came out for the day, he would trail him about the town, and sometimes they would be gone for hours together out in the swamp.

And Miss Amelia continued to do the worst thing possible: that is, to try to follow several courses at once. When Cousin Lymon left the house she did not call him back, but only stood in the middle of the road and watched lonesomely until he was out of sight. Nearly every day Marvin Macy turned up with Cousin Lymon at dinner-time, and ate at her table. Miss Amelia opened the pear preserves, and the table was well-set with ham or chicken, great bowls of hominy grits, and winter peas. It is true that on one occasion Miss Amelia tried to poison Marvin Macy—but there was a mistake, the plates were confused, and it was she herself who got the poisoned dish. This she quickly realized by the slight bitterness of the food, and that day she ate no dinner. She sat tilted back in her chair, feeling her muscle, and looking at Marvin Macy.

Every night Marvin Macy came to the café and settled himself at the best and largest table, the one in the center of the room. Cousin Lymon brought him liquor, for which he did not pay a cent. Marvin

The Ballad of the Sad Café

Macy brushed the hunchback aside as if he were a swamp mosquito, and not only did he show no gratitude for these favors, but if the hunchback got in his way he would cuff him with the back of his hand or say: "Out of my way, Brokeback, I'll snatch you bald-headed." When this happened Miss Amelia would come out from behind her counter and approach Marvin Macy very slowly, her fists clenched, her peculiar red dress hanging awkwardly around her bony knees. Marvin Macy would also clench his fists and they would walk slowly and meaningfully around each other. But, although everyone watched breathlessly, nothing ever came of it. The time for the fight was not yet ready.

There is one particular reason why this winter is remembered and still talked about. A great thing happened. People woke up on the second of January and found the whole world about them altogether changed. Little ignorant children looked out of the windows and they were so puzzled that they began to cry. Old people harked back and could remember nothing in these parts to equal the phenomenon. For in the night it had snowed. In the dark hours after midnight the dim flakes started falling softly on the town. By dawn the ground was covered, and the strange snow banked the ruby windows of the church, and whitened the roofs of the town. The snow gave the town a drawn, bleak look. The two-room houses near the mill were dirty, crooked, and seemed about to collapse, and somehow everything was dark and shrunken. But the snow itself—there was a beauty about it few people around here had ever known before. The snow was not white, as Northerners had pictured it to be: in the snow there were soft colors of blue and silver, the sky was a gentle shining gray. And the dreamy quietness of falling snow—when had the town been so silent?

People reacted to the snowfall in various ways. Miss Amelia, on looking out of her window, thoughtfully wiggled the toes of her bare feet, gathered close to her neck the collar of her nightgown. She stood there for some time, then commenced to draw the shutters and lock every window on the premises. She closed the place completely, lighted the lamps, and sat solemnly over her bowl of grits. The

Kay Boyle

reason for this was not that Miss Amelia feared the snowfall. It was simply that she was unable to form an immediate opinion of this new event, and unless she knew exactly and definitely what she thought of a matter (which was nearly always the case) she preferred to ignore it. Snow had never fallen in this county in her lifetime, and she had never thought about it one way or the other. But if she admitted this snowfall she would have to come to some decision, and in those days there was enough distraction in her life as it was already. So she poked about the gloomy, lamp-lighted house and pretended that nothing had happened. Cousin Lymon, on the contrary, chased around in the wildest excitement and when Miss Amelia turned her back to dish him some breakfast he slipped out of the door.

Marvin Macy laid claim to the snowfall. He said that he knew snow, had seen it in Atlanta, and from the way he walked about the town that day it was as though he owned every flake. He sneered at the little children who crept timidly out of the houses and scooped up handfuls of snow to taste. Reverend Willin hurried down the road with a furious face, as he was thinking deeply and trying to weave the snow into his Sunday sermon. Most people were humble and glad about this marvel; they spoke in hushed voices and said "thank you" and "please" more than was necessary. A few weak characters, of course, were demoralized and got drunk—but they were not numerous. To everyone this was an occasion and many counted their money and planned to go to the café that night.

Cousin Lymon followed Marvin Macy about all day, seconding his claim to the snow. He marveled that snow did not fall as does rain, and stared up at the dreamy gently falling flakes until he stumbled from dizziness. And the pride he took on himself, basking in the glory of Marvin Macy—it was such that many people could not resist calling out to him: "'Oho,' said the fly on the chariot wheel. 'What a dust we do raise!'"

Miss Amelia did not intend to serve a dinner. But when, at six o'clock there was the sound of footsteps on the porch she opened the front door cautiously. It was Henry Ford Crimp, and though there was no food, she let him sit at a table and served him a drink. Others

The Ballad of the Sad Café

came. The evening was blue, bitter, and though the snow fell no longer there was a wind from the pine trees that swept up delicate flurries from the ground. Cousin Lymon did not come until after dark, with him Marvin Macy, and he carried his tin suitcase and his guitar.

"So you mean to travel?" said Miss Amelia quickly.

Marvin Macy warmed himself at the stove. Then he settled down at his table and carefully sharpened a little stick. He picked his teeth, frequently taking the stick out of his mouth to look at the end and wipe it on the sleeve of his coat. He did not bother to answer.

The hunchback looked at Miss Amelia, who was behind the counter. His face was not in the least beseeching; he seemed quite sure of himself. He folded his hands behind his back and perked up his ears confidently. His cheeks were red, his eyes shining, and his clothes were soggy wet. "Marvin Macy is going to visit a spell with us," he said.

Miss Amelia made no protest. She only came out from behind the counter and hovered over the stove, as though the news had made her suddenly cold. She did not warm her backside modestly, lifting her skirt only an inch or so, as do most women when in public. There was not a grain of modesty about Miss Amelia, and she frequently seemed to forget altogether that there were men in the room. Now as she stood warming herself, her red dress was pulled up quite high in the back so that a piece of her strong, hairy thigh could be seen by anyone who cared to look at it. Her head was turned to one side; and she had begun talking with herself, nodding and wrinkling her forehead, and there was the tone of accusation and reproach in her voice although the words were not plain. Meanwhile the hunchback and Marvin Macy had gone upstairs—up to the parlor with the pampas grass and the two sewing machines, to the private rooms where Miss Amelia had lived the whole of her life. Down in the café you could hear them bumping around, unpacking Marvin Macy, and getting him settled.

That is the way Marvin Macy crowded into Miss Amelia's home. At first Cousin Lymon, who had given Marvin his own room, slept

Kay Boyle

on the sofa in the parlor. But the snowfall had a bad effect on him; he caught a cold that turned into a winter quinsy, so Miss Amelia gave up her bed to him. The sofa in the parlor was much too short for her, her feet lapped over the edges, and often she rolled off onto the floor. Perhaps it was this lack of sleep that clouded her wits; everything she tried to do against Marvin Macy rebounded on herself. She got caught in her own tricks, and found herself in many pitiful positions. But still she did not put Marvin Macy off the premises, as she was afraid that she would be left alone. Once you have lived with another, it is a great torture to have to live alone. The silence of a firelit room when suddenly the clock stops ticking, the nervous shadows in an empty house—it is better to take in your mortal enemy than face the terror of living alone.

The snow did not last. The sun came out and within two days the town was just as it had always been before. Miss Amelia did not open her house until every flake had melted. Then she had a big house cleaning and aired everything out in the sun. But before that, the very first thing she did on going out again into her yard, was to tie a rope to the largest branch of the chinaberry tree. At the end of the rope she tied a crocus sack tightly stuffed with sand. This was the punching bag she made for herself, and from that day on she would box with it out in her yard every morning. Already she was a fine fighter—a little heavy on her feet but knowing all manner of mean holts and squeezes to make up for this.

Miss Amelia, as has been mentioned, measured six feet two inches in height. Marvin Macy was one inch shorter. In weight they were about even—both of them weighing close to a hundred and sixty pounds. Marvin Macy had the advantage in slyness of movement, and in toughness of chest. In fact from the outward point of view the odds were altogether in his favor. Yet almost everyone in the town was betting on Miss Amelia; scarcely a person would put up money on Marvin Macy. The town remembered the great fight between Miss Amelia and a Forks Falls lawyer who had tried to cheat her. He had been a huge strapping fellow, but he was left three-quarters dead when she had finished with him. And it was not only

The Ballad of the Sad Café

her talent as a boxer that had impressed everyone—she could demoralize her enemy by making terrifying faces and fierce noises, so that even the spectators were sometimes cowed. She was brave, she practiced faithfully with her punching bag, and in this case she was clearly in the right. So people had confidence in her, and they waited. Of course there was no set date for this fight. There were just the signs that were too plain to be overlooked.

During these times the hunchback strutted around with a pleased little pinched-up face. In many delicate and clever ways he stirred up trouble between them. He was constantly plucking at Marvin Macy's trouser leg to draw attention to himself. Sometimes he followed in Miss Amelia's footsteps—but these days it was only in order to imitate her awkward, long-legged walk; he crossed his eyes and aped her gestures in a way that made her appear to be a freak. There was something so terrible about this that even the silliest customers of the café, such as Merlie Ryan, did not laugh. Only Marvin Macy drew up the left corner of his mouth and chuckled. Miss Amelia, when this happened, would be divided between two emotions. She would look at the hunchback with a lost, dismal reproach—then turn toward Marvin Macy with her teeth clamped.

“Bust a gut!” she would say bitterly.

And Marvin Macy, most likely, would pick up his guitar from the floor beside his chair. His voice was wet and slimy, as he always had too much spit in his mouth. And the tunes he sang glided slowly from his throat like eels. His strong fingers picked the strings with dainty skill, and everything he sang both lured and exasperated. This was usually more than Miss Amelia could stand.

“Bust a gut!” she would repeat, in a shout.

But always Marvin Macy had the answer ready for her. He would cover the strings to silence the quivering left-over tones, and reply with slow, sure insolence.

“Everything you holler at me bounces back on yourself. Yah! Yah!”

Miss Amelia would have to stand there helpless, as no one has ever invented a way out of this trap. She could not shout out abuse

Kay Boyle

that would bounce back on herself. He had the best of her, there was nothing she could do.

So things went on like this. What happened between the three of them during the nights in the rooms upstairs nobody knows. But the café became more and more crowded every night. A new table had to be brought in. Even the Hermit, the crazy man named Rainer Smith who took to the swamp years ago, heard something of the situation and came one night to look in at the window and brood over the gathering in the bright café. And the climax each evening was the time when Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy doubled their fists, squared up, and glared at each other. Usually this did not happen after any especial argument, but it seemed to come about mysteriously, by means of some instinct on the part of both of them. At these times the café would become so quiet that you could hear the bouquet of paper roses rustling in the draft. And each night they held this fighting stance a little longer than the night before.

The fight took place on Ground Hog Day, which is the second of February. The weather was favorable, being neither rainy nor sunny and with a neutral temperature. There were several signs that this was the appointed day, and by ten o'clock the news spread all over the county. Early in the morning Miss Amelia went out and cut down her punching bag. Marvin Macy sat on the back step with a tin can of hog fat between his knees and carefully greased his arms and legs. A hawk with a bloody breast flew over the town and circled twice around the property of Miss Amelia. The tables in the café were moved out to the back porch, so that the whole big room was cleared for the fight. There was every sign. Both Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy ate four helpings of half-raw roast for dinner, and then lay down in the afternoon to store up strength. Marvin Macy rested in the big room upstairs, while Miss Amelia stretched herself out on the bench in her office. It was plain from her white stiff face what a torment it was for her to be lying still and doing nothing, but she lay there quiet as a corpse with her eyes closed and her hands crossed on her chest.

Cousin Lymon had a restless day, and his little face was drawn and

The Ballad of the Sad Café

tightened with excitement. He put himself up a lunch, and set out to find the ground hog—within an hour he returned, the lunch eaten, and said that the ground hog had seen his shadow and there was to be bad weather ahead. Then, as Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy were both resting to gather strength and he was left to himself, it occurred to him that he might as well paint the front porch. The house had not been painted for years—in fact God knows if it had ever been painted at all. Cousin Lymon scrambled around and soon he had painted half the floor of the porch a gay bright green. It was a lollolly job, and he smeared himself all over. Typically enough he did not even finish the floor, but changed over to the walls, painting as high as he could reach and then standing on a crate to get up a foot higher. When the paint ran out, the right side of the floor was a bright green and there was a jagged portion of wall that had been painted. Cousin Lymon left it at that.

There was something childish about his satisfaction with his painting. And in this respect a curious fact should be mentioned. No one in the town, not even Miss Amelia, had any idea how old the hunchback was. Some maintained that when he came to town he was about twelve years old, still a child—others were certain that he was well past forty. His eyes were blue and steady as a child's, but there were lavender creepy shadows beneath these blue eyes that hinted of age. It was impossible to guess his age by his hunched queer body. And even his teeth gave no clue—they were all still in his head (two were broken from cracking a pecan), but he had stained them with so much sweet snuff that it was impossible to decide whether they were old teeth or young teeth. When questioned directly about his age the hunchback professed to know absolutely nothing—he had no idea how long he had been on the earth, whether for ten years or a hundred! So his age remained a puzzle.

Cousin Lymon finished his painting at five thirty o'clock in the afternoon. The day had turned colder and there was a wet taste in the air. The wind came up from the pinewoods, rattling windows, blowing an old newspaper down the road until at last it caught upon a thorn tree. People began to come in from the country; packed

Kay Boyle

automobiles that bristled with the poked-out heads of children, wagons drawn by old mules who seemed to smile in a weary sour way and plodded along with their tired eyes half-closed. Three young boys came from Society City. All three of them wore yellow rayon shirts and caps put on backward—they were as much alike as triplets, and could always be seen at cock-fights and camp meetings. At six o'clock the mill whistle sounded the end of the day's shift and the crowd was complete. Naturally among the newcomers there was some riffraff, unknown characters, and so forth—but even so the gathering was quiet. A hush was on the town and the faces of people were strange in the fading light. Darkness hovered softly; for a moment the sky was a pale clear yellow against which the gables of the church stood out in dark and bare outline, then the sky died slowly and the darkness gathered into night.

Seven is a popular number, and especially it was a favorite with Miss Amelia. Seven swallows of water for hiccups, seven runs around the millpond for cricks in the neck, seven doses of Amelia Miracle Mover as a worm cure—her treatment nearly always hinged on this number. It is a number of mingled possibilities and all who love mystery and charms set store by it. So the fight was to take place at seven o'clock. This was known to everyone, not by announcement or words, but understood in the unquestioning way that rain is understood or an evil odor from the swamps. So before seven o'clock everyone gathered gravely around the property of Miss Amelia. The cleverest got into the café itself and stood lining the walls of the room. Others crowded onto the front porch, or took a stand in the yard.

Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy had not yet shown themselves. Miss Amelia, after resting all afternoon on the office bench, had gone upstairs. On the other hand Cousin Lymon was at your elbow every minute, threading his way through the crowd, snapping his fingers nervously, and batting his eyes. At one minute to seven o'clock he squirmed his way into the café and climbed up on the counter. All was very quiet.

It must have been arranged in some manner beforehand. For just at the stroke of seven Miss Amelia showed herself at the head of the

The Ballad of the Sad Café

stairs. At the same instant Marvin Macy appeared in the front of the café and the crowd made way for him silently. They walked toward each other with no haste, their fists already gripped, and their eyes like the eyes of dreamers. Miss Amelia had changed her red dress for her old overalls, and they were rolled up to the knees. She was bare-footed and she had an iron strength-band around her right wrist. Marvin Macy had also rolled his trouser legs—he was naked to the waist and heavily greased; he wore the heavy shoes that had been issued him when he left the penitentiary. Stumpy MacPhail stepped forward from the crowd and slapped their hip pockets with the palm of his hand to make sure there would be no sudden knives. Then they were alone in the cleared center of the bright café.

There was no signal, but they both struck out simultaneously. Both blows landed on the chin, so that the heads of Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy bobbed back and they were left a little groggy. For a few seconds after the first blows they merely shuffled their feet around on the bare floor, experimenting with various positions, and making mock fists. Then, like wildcats, they were suddenly on each other. There was the sound of knocks, panting, and thumpings on the floor. They were so fast that it was hard to take in what was going on—but once Miss Amelia was hurled backward so that she staggered and almost fell, and another time Marvin Macy caught a knock on the shoulder that spun him round like a top. So the fight went on in this wild violent way with no sign of weakening on either side.

During a struggle like this, when the enemies are as quick and strong as these two, it is worth-while to turn from the confusion of the fight itself and observe the spectators. The people had flattened back as close as possible against the walls. Stumpy MacPhail was in a corner, crouched over and with his fists tight in sympathy, making strange noises. Poor Merlie Ryan had his mouth so wide open that a fly buzzed into it, and was swallowed before Merlie realized what had happened. And Cousin Lymon—he was worth watching. The hunchback still stood on the counter, so that he was raised up above everyone else in the café. He had his hands on his hips, his big head

Kay Boyle

thrust forward, and his little legs bent so that the knees jutted outward. The excitement had made him break out in a rash, and his pale mouth shivered.

Perhaps it was half an hour before the course of the fight shifted. Hundreds of blows had been exchanged, and there was still a deadlock. Then suddenly Marvin Macy managed to catch hold of Miss Amelia's left arm and pinion it behind her back. She struggled and got a grasp around his waist; the real fight was now begun. Wrestling is the natural way of fighting in this county—as boxing is too quick and requires much thinking and concentration. And now that Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy were locked in a hold together the crowd came out of its daze and pressed in closer. For a while the fighters grappled muscle to muscle, their hipbones braced against each other. Backward and forward, from side to side, they swayed in this way. Marvin Macy still had not sweated, but Miss Amelia's overalls were drenched and so much sweat had trickled down her legs that she left wet footprints on the floor. Now the test had come, and in these moments of terrible effort, it was Miss Amelia who was the stronger. Marvin Macy was greased and slippery, tricky to grasp, but she was stronger. Gradually she bent him over backward, and inch by inch she forced him to the floor. It was a terrible thing to watch and their deep hoarse breaths were the only sound in the café. At last she had him down, and straddled; her strong big hands were on his throat.

But at that instant, just as the fight was won, a cry sounded in the café that caused a shrill bright shiver to run down the spine. And what took place has been a mystery ever since. The whole town was there to testify what happened, but there were those who doubted their own eyesight. For the counter on which Cousin Lymon stood was at least twelve feet from the fighters in the center of the café. Yet at the instant Miss Amelia grasped the throat of Marvin Macy the hunchback sprang forward and sailed through the air as though he had grown hawk wings. He landed on the broad strong back of Miss Amelia and clutched at her neck with his clawed little fingers.

The rest is confusion. Miss Amelia was beaten before the crowd could come to their senses. Because of the hunchback the fight was

The Ballad of the Sad Café

won by Marvin Macy, and at the end Miss Amelia lay sprawled on the floor, her arms flung outward and motionless. Marvin Macy stood over her, his face somewhat popeyed but smiling his old half-mouthed smile. And the hunchback, he had suddenly disappeared. Perhaps he was frightened about what he had done, or maybe he was so delighted that he wanted to glory with himself alone—at any rate he slipped out of the café and crawled under the back steps. Someone poured water on Miss Amelia and after a time she got up slowly and dragged herself into her office. Through the open door the crowd could see her sitting at her desk, her head in the crook of her arm, and she was sobbing with the last of her grating, winded breath. Once she gathered her right fist together and knocked it three times on the top of her office desk, then her hand opened feebly and lay palm upward and still. Stumpy MacPhail stepped forward and closed the door.

The crowd was quiet, and one by one the people left the café. Mules were waked up and untied, automobiles cranked, and the three boys from Society City roamed off down the road on foot. This was not a fight to hash over and talk about afterward; people went home and pulled the covers up over their heads. The town was dark, except for the premises of Miss Amelia, but every room was lighted there the whole night long.

Marvin Macy and the hunchback must have left town an hour or so before daylight. And before they went away this is what they did:

They unlocked the private cabinet of curios and took everything in it.

They broke the mechanical piano.

They carved terrible words on the café tables.

They found the watch that opened in the back to show a picture of a waterfall and took that also.

They poured a gallon of sorghum syrup all over the kitchen floor and smashed the jars of preserves.

They went out in the swamp and completely wrecked the still, ruining the big new condenser and the cooler, and setting fire to the shack itself.

Kay Boyle

They fixed a dish of Miss Amelia's favorite food, grits with sausage, seasoned it with enough poison to kill off the county, and placed this dish temptingly on the café counter.

They did everything ruinous they could think of without actually breaking into the office where Miss Amelia stayed the night. Then they went off together, the two of them.

That was how Miss Amelia was left alone in the town. The people would have helped her if they had known how, as people in this town will as often as not be kindly if they have a chance. Several housewives nosed around with brooms and offered to clear up the wreck. But Miss Amelia only looked at them with lost crossed eyes and shook her head. Stumpy MacPhail came in on the third day to buy a plug of Queenie tobacco, and Miss Amelia said the price was one dollar. Everything in the café had suddenly risen in price to be worth one dollar. And what sort of a café is that? Also, she changed very queerly as a doctor. In all the years before she had been much more popular than the Cheehaw doctor. She had never monkeyed around with a patient's soul, taking away from him such real necessities as liquor, tobacco, and so forth. Once in a great while she might carefully warn a patient never to eat fried watermelon or some such dish it had never occurred to a person to want in the first place. Now all this wise doctoring was over. She told one-half of her patients that they were going to die outright, and to the remaining half she recommended cures so farfetched and agonizing that no one in his right mind would consider them for a moment.

Miss Amelia let her hair grow ragged, and it was turning gray. Her face lengthened, and the great muscle of her body shrank until she was thin as old maids are thin when they go crazy. And those gray eyes—slowly day by day they were more crossed, and it was as though they sought each other out to exchange a little glance of grief and lonely recognition. She was not pleasant to listen to; her tongue had sharpened terribly.

When anyone mentioned the hunchback she would say only this: "Ho! If I could lay hand to him I would rip out his gizzard and throw it to the cat!" But it was not so much the words that were ter-

The Ballad of the Sad Café

rible, but the voice in which they were said. Her voice had lost its old vigor; there was none of the ring of vengeance it used to have when she would mention "that loom-fixer I was married to," or some other enemy. Her voice was broken, soft, and sad as the wheezy whine of the church pump-organ.

For three years she sat out on the front steps every night, alone and silent, looking down the road and waiting. But the hunchback never returned. There were rumors that Marvin Macy used him to climb into windows and steal, and other rumors that Marvin Macy had sold him into a side show. But both these reports were traced back to Merlie Ryan. Nothing true was ever heard of him. It was in the fourth year that Miss Amelia hired a Cheehaw carpenter and had him board up the premises, and there in those closed rooms she has remained ever since.

Yes, the town is dreary. On August afternoons the road is empty, white with dust, and the sky above is bright as glass. Nothing moves—there are no children's voices, only the hum of the mill. The peach trees seem to grow more crooked every summer, and the leaves are dull gray and of a sickly delicacy. The house of Miss Amelia leans so much to the right that it is now only a question of time when it will collapse completely, and people are careful not to walk around the yard. There is no good liquor to be bought in the town; the nearest still is eight miles away, and the liquor is such that those who drink it grow warts on their livers the size of goobers, and dream themselves into a dangerous inward world. There is absolutely nothing to do in the town. Walk around the millpond, stand kicking at a rotten stump, figure out what you can do with the old wagon wheel by the side of the road near the church. The soul rots with boredom. You might as well go down to the Forks Falls highway and listen to the chain gang.

THE TWELVE MORTAL MEN

The Forks Falls highway is three miles from the town, and it is here the chain gang has been working. The road is of macadam, and the county decided to patch up the rough places and widen it at a

Kay Boyle

certain dangerous place. The gang is made up of twelve men, all wearing black and white striped prison suits, and chained at the ankles. There is a guard, with a gun, his eyes drawn to red slits by the glare. The gang works all the day long, arriving huddled in the prison cart soon after daybreak, and being driven off again in the gray August twilight. All day there is the sound of the picks striking into the clay earth, hard sunlight, the smell of sweat. And every day there is music. One dark voice will start a phrase, half-sung, and like a question. And after a moment another voice will join in, soon the whole gang will be singing. The voices are dark in the golden glare, the music intricately blended, both somber and joyful. The music will swell until at last it seems that the sound does not come from the twelve men on the gang, but from the earth itself or the wide sky. It is music that causes the heart to broaden and the listener to grow cold with ecstasy and fright. Then slowly the music will sink down until at last there remains one lonely voice, then a great hoarse breath, the sun, the sound of the picks in the silence.

And what kind of gang is this that can make such music? Just twelve mortal men, seven of them black and five of them white boys from this county. Just twelve mortal men who are together.

SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN:

"I wish I had written

I Paint What I See

by E. B. WHITE"

Mr. Hoffenstein, the much read and quoted humorist poet, author of POEMS IN PRAISE OF PRACTICALLY NOTHING and many other memorable light verses, now spends most of his time in Hollywood, but apparently with memories of a little feud that existed for a while in New York. His reason for wishing he had written Mr. White's monument to that feud is that "it is not only superbly witty, sardonic and melodious verse, but, to my taste, it presents in miniature one of the most delightful comedy teams in literature, along with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller. I wish John D's grandson Nelson and Rivera could make regular public appearances for the edification of mankind, assuming that mankind deserves any edification."

A Ballad of Artistic Integrity, on the Occasion of the Removal of Some Rather Expensive Murals from the RCA Building

"What do you paint, when you paint on a wall?"

Said John D's grandson Nelson.

"Do you paint just anything there at all?

"Will there be any doves, or a tree in fall?

"Or a hunting scene, like an English hall?"

"I paint what I see," said Rivera.

"What are the colors you use when you paint?"

Said John D's grandson Nelson.

"Do you use any red in the beard of a saint?

Permission of the author. Copyright, 1933, by E. B. White. Originally published in *The New Yorker*.

Samuel Hoffenstein

“If you do, is it terribly red, or faint?
“Do you use any blue? Is it Prussian?”

“*I paint what I paint,*” said Rivera.

“Whose is that head that I see on my wall?”
Said John D’s grandson Nelson.

“Is it anyone’s head whom we know, at all?
“A Rensselaer, or a Saltonstall?
“Is it Franklin D? Is it Mordaunt Hall?
“Or is it the head of a Russian?”

“*I paint what I think,*” said Rivera.

“*I paint what I paint, I paint what I see,*
“*I paint what I think,*” said Rivera,
“*And the thing that is dearest in life to me*
“*In a bourgeois hall is Integrity;*
“*However . . .*

“*I’ll take out a couple of people drinkin’*
“*And put in a picture of Abraham Lincoln;*
“*I could even give you McCormick’s reaper*
“*And still not make my art much cheaper.*
“*But the head of Lenin has got to stay*
“*Or my friends will give me the bird today,*
“*The bird, the bird, forever.”*

“It’s not good taste in a man like me,”
Said John D’s grandson Nelson,
“To question an artist’s integrity
“Or mention a practical thing like a fee,
“But I know what I like, to a large degree,
“Though art I hate to hamper;
“For twenty-one thousand conservative bucks
“You painted a radical. I say shucks,
“I never could rent the offices—

I Paint What I See

“The capitalistic offices.

“For this, as you know, is a public hall

“And people want doves, or a tree in fall,

“And though your art I dislike to hamper,

“I owe a *little* to God and Gramper,

“And after all,

“It’s *my* wall . . .

“*We’ll see if it is,*” said Rivera.

JOHN DOS PASSOS:

"I wish I had written

Picture of a Party

from THE GREAT GATSBY

by F. SCOTT FITZGERALD"

Mr. Dos Passos, the novelist whose published works also include essays, poetry, plays and travel books, is especially noted for his brilliant word pictures of the American scene. Author of the well-known MANHATTAN TRANSFER, 42ND PARALLEL and BIG MONEY, Mr. Dos Passos says, "This sequence from THE GREAT GATSBY made a great impression on me the first time I read it. Like so many of the passages in first-rate novels that sink into your mind and that you remember as great, when you go back to reread it you are surprised to find it shorter and less worked up than you remembered. Fitzgerald packed an immense amount of matter into these few exuberantly and sardonically written pages. The reader, as with all really good novel writing, finds himself in Fitzgerald's own words 'within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.'"

ABOUT half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-gray men, who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and comes

From THE GREAT GATSBY. Copyright, 1925, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

Picture of a Party

to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight.

But above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.

The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and, when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute, and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.

The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular cafés with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomsoever he knew. Though I was curious to see her, I had no desire to meet her—but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon, and when we stopped by the ashheaps he jumped to his feet and, taking hold of my elbow, literally forced me from the car.

"We're getting off," he insisted. "I want you to meet my girl."

I think he'd tanked up a good deal at luncheon, and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do.

I followed him over a low whitewashed railroad fence, and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it, and contiguous to absolutely noth-

John Dos Passos

ing. One of three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant, approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—*Repairs*. GEORGE B. WILSON. *Cars bought and sold.*—and I followed Tom inside.

The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind, and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead, when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He was a blond, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes.

"Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?"

"I can't complain," answered Wilson unconvincingly. "When are you going to sell me that car?"

"Next week; I've got my man working on it now."

"Works pretty slow, don't he?"

"No, he doesn't," said Tom coldly. "And if you feel that way about it, maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all."

"I don't mean that," explained Wilson quickly. "I just meant—"

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs, and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crêpe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and, walking through her husband as if he were a ghost, shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips, and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice:

"Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down."

"Oh, sure," agreed Wilson hurriedly, and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A

Picture of a Party

white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity—except his wife, who moved close to Tom.

“I want to see you,” said Tom intently. “Get on the next train.”
“All right.”

“I’ll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level.”

She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door.

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a gray, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

“Terrible place, isn’t it,” said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.

“Awful.”

“It does her good to get away.”

“Doesn’t her husband object?”

“Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He’s so dumb he doesn’t know he’s alive.”

So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York—or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin, which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she bought a copy of Town Tattle and a moving-picture magazine, and in the station drug-store some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Up-stairs, in the solemn echoing drive, she let four taxicabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with gray upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But immediately she turned sharply from the window and, leaning forward, tapped on the front glass.

“I want to get one of those dogs,” she said earnestly. “I want to get one for the apartment. They’re nice to have—a dog.”

We backed up to a gray old man who bore an absurd resemblance

John Dos Passos

to John D. Rockefeller. In a basket swung from his neck cowered a dozen very recent puppies of an indeterminate breed.

"What kind are they?" asked Mrs. Wilson eagerly, as he came to the taxi-window.

"All kinds. What kind do you want, lady?"

"I'd like to get one of those police dogs; I don't suppose you got that kind?"

The man peered doubtfully into the basket, plunged in his hand and drew one up, wriggling, by the back of the neck.

"That's no police dog," said Tom.

"No, it's not exactly a *police dog*," said the man with disappointment in his voice. "It's more of an Airedale." He passed his hand over the brown washrag of a back. "Look at that coat. Some coat. That's a dog that'll never bother you with catching cold."

"I think it's cute," said Mrs. Wilson enthusiastically. "How much is it?"

"That dog?" He looked at it admiringly. "That dog will cost you ten dollars."

The Airedale—undoubtedly there was an Airedale concerned in it somewhere, though its feet were startlingly white—changed hands and settled down into Mrs. Wilson's lap, where she fondled the weatherproof coat with rapture.

"Is it a boy or a girl?" she asked delicately.

"That dog? That dog's a boy."

"It's a bitch," said Tom decisively. "Here's your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it."

We drove over to Fifth Avenue, warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon. I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner.

"Hold on," I said, "I have to leave you here."

"No, you don't," interposed Tom quickly. "Myrtle'll be hurt if you don't come up to the apartment. Won't you, Myrtle?"

"Come on," she urged. "I'll telephone my sister Catherine. She's said to be very beautiful by people who ought to know."

"Well, I'd like to, but—"

Picture of a Party

We went on, cutting back again over the Park toward the West Hundreds. At 158th Street the cab stopped at one slice in a long white cake of apartment-houses. Throwing a regal homecoming glance around the neighborhood, Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases, and went haughtily in.

"I'm going to have the McKees come up," she announced as we rose in the elevator. "And, of course, I got to call up my sister, too."

The apartment was on the top floor—a small living-room, a small dining-room, a small bedroom, and a bath. The living-room was crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it, so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance, however, the hen resolved itself into a bonnet, and the countenance of a stout old lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of Town Tattle lay on the table together with a copy of "Simon Called Peter," and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. Mrs. Wilson was first concerned with the dog. A reluctant elevator-boy went for a box full of straw and some milk, to which he added on his own initiative a tin of large, hard dog-biscuits—one of which decomposed apathetically in the saucer of milk all afternoon. Meanwhile Tom brought out a bottle of whiskey from a locked bureau door.

I have been drunk just twice in my life, and the second time was that afternoon; so everything that happened has a dim, hazy cast over it, although until after eight o'clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun. Sitting on Tom's lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes, and I went out to buy some at the drug-store on the corner. When I came back they had both disappeared, so I sat down discreetly in the living-room and read a chapter of "Simon Called Peter"—either it was terrible stuff or the whiskey distorted things, because it didn't make any sense to me.

Just as Tom and Myrtle (after the first drink Mrs. Wilson and I

John Dos Passos

called each other by our first names) reappeared, company commenced to arrive at the apartment door.

The sister, Catherine, was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty, with a solid, sticky bob of red hair, and a complexion powdered milky white. Her eyebrows had been plucked and then drawn on again at a more rakish angle, but the efforts of nature toward the restoration of the old alignment gave a blurred air to her face. When she moved about there was an incessant clicking as innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms. She came in with such a proprietary haste and looked around so possessively at the furniture that I wondered if she lived here. But when I asked her she laughed immoderately, repeated my question aloud, and told me she lived with a girl friend at a hotel.

Mr. McKee was a pale, feminine man from the flat below. He had just shaved, for there was a white spot of lather on his cheekbone, and he was most respectful in his greeting to every one in the room. He informed me that he was in the "artistic game," and I gathered later that he was a photographer and had made the dim enlargement of Mrs. Wilson's mother which hovered like an ectoplasm on the wall. His wife was shrill, languid, handsome, and horrible. She told me with pride that her husband had photographed her a hundred and twenty-seven times since they had been married.

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume some time before, and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream-colored chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room. With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment, and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her, until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air.

"My dear," she told her sister in a high, mincing shout, "most of these fellas will cheat you every time. All they think of is money."

Picture of a Party

I had a woman up here last week to look at my feet, and when she gave me the bill you'd of thought she had my appendicitis out."

"What was the name of the woman?" asked Mrs. McKee.

"Mrs. Eberhardt. She goes around looking at people's feet in their own homes."

"I like your dress," remarked Mrs. McKee. "I think it's adorable."

Mrs. Wilson rejected the compliment by raising her eyebrow in disdain.

"It's just a crazy old thing," she said. "I just slip it on sometimes when I don't care what I look like."

"But it looks wonderful on you, if you know what I mean," pursued Mrs. McKee. "If Chester could only get you in that pose I think he could make something of it."

We all looked in silence at Mrs. Wilson, who removed a strand of hair from over her eyes and looked back at us with a brilliant smile. Mr. McFee regarded her intently with his head on one side, and then moved his hand back and forth slowly in front of his face.

"I should change the light," he said after a moment. "I'd like to bring out the modelling of the features. And I'd try to get hold of all the back hair."

"I wouldn't think of changing the light," cried Mrs. McKee. "I think it's—"

Her husband said "*Sh!*" and we all looked at the subject again, whereupon Tom Buchanan yawned audibly and got to his feet.

"You McKees have something to drink," he said. "Get some more ice and mineral water, Myrtle, before everybody goes to sleep."

"I told that boy about the ice." Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. "These people! You have to keep after them all the time."

She looked at me and laughed pointlessly. Then she flounced over to the dog, kissed it with ecstasy, and went into the kitchen, implying that a dozen chefs awaited her orders there.

"I've done some nice things out on Long Island," asserted Mr. McKee.

Tom looked at him blankly.

John Dos Passos

"Two of them we have framed down-stairs."

"Two what?" demanded Tom.

"Two studies. One of them I call 'Montauk Point—The Gulls,' and the other I call 'Montauk Point—The Sea.' "

The sister Catherine sat down beside me on the couch.

"Do you live down on Long Island, too?" she inquired.

"I live at West Egg."

"Really? I was down there at a party about a month ago. At a man named Gatsby's. Do you know him?"

"I live next door to him."

"Well, they say he's a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's. That's where all his money comes from."

"Really?"

She nodded.

"I'm scared of him. I'd hate to have him get anything on me."

This absorbing information about my neighbor was interrupted by Mrs. McKee's pointing suddenly at Catherine:

"Chester, I think you could do something with her," she broke out, but Mr. McKee only nodded in a bored way, and turned his attention to Tom.

"I'd like to do more work on Long Island, if I could get the entry. All I ask is that they should give me a start."

"Ask Myrtle," said Tom, breaking into a short shout of laughter as Mrs. Wilson entered with a tray. "She'll give you a letter of introduction, won't you, Myrtle?"

"Do what?" she asked, startled.

"You'll give McKee a letter of introduction to your husband, so he can do some studies of him." His lips moved silently for a moment as he invented. "'George B. Wilson at the Gasoline Pump,' or something like that."

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered in my ear: "Neither of them can stand the person they're married to."

"Can't they?"

"Can't stand them." She looked at Myrtle and then at Tom. "What I say is, why go on living with them if they can't stand them?"

Picture of a Party

If I was them I'd get a divorce and get married to each other right away."

"Doesn't she like Wilson either?"

The answer to this was unexpected. It came from Myrtle, who had overheard the conversation, and it was violent and obscene.

"You see," cried Catherine triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. "It's really his wife that's keeping them apart. She's a Catholic, and they don't believe in divorce."

Daisy was not a Catholic, and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie.

"When they do get married," continued Catherine, "they're going West to live for a while until it blows over."

"It'd be more discreet to go to Europe."

"Oh, do you like Europe?" she exclaimed surprisingly. "I just got back from Monte Carlo."

"Really."

"Just last year. I went over there with another girl."

"Stay long?"

"No, we just went to Monte Carlo and back. We went by way of Marseilles. We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started, but we got gypped out of it all in two days in the private rooms. We had an awful time getting back, I can tell you. God, how I hated that town!"

The late afternoon sky bloomed in the window for a moment like the blue honey of the Mediterranean—then the shrill voice of Mrs. McKee called me back into the room. "I almost made a mistake, too," she declared vigorously. "I almost married a little kyke who'd been after me for years. I knew he was below me. Everybody kept saying to me: 'Lucille, that man's 'way below you!' But if I hadn't met Chester, he'd of got me sure."

"Yes, but listen," said Myrtle Wilson, nodding her head up and down, "at least you didn't marry him."

"I know I didn't."

"Well, I married him," said Myrtle, ambiguously. "And that's the difference between your case and mine."

John Dos Passos

"Why did you, Myrtle?" demanded Catherine. "Nobody forced you to."

Myrtle considered.

"I married him because I thought he was a gentleman," she said finally. "I thought he knew something about breeding, but he wasn't fit to lick my shoe."

"You were crazy about him for a while," said Catherine.

"Crazy about him!" cried Myrtle incredulously. "Who said I was crazy about him? I never was any more crazy about him than I was about that man there."

She pointed suddenly at me, and every one looked at me accusingly. I tried to show by my expression that I expected no affection.

"The only *crazy* I was was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody's best suit to get married in, and never even told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out: 'Oh, is that your suit?' I said. 'This is the first I ever heard about it.' But I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon."

"She really ought to get away from him," resumed Catherine to me. "They've been living over that garage for eleven years. And Tom's the first sweetie she ever had."

The bottle of whiskey—a second one—was now in constant demand by all present, excepting Catherine, who "felt just as good on nothing at all." Tom rang for the janitor and sent him for some celebrated sandwiches, which were a complete supper in themselves. I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight, but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild, strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I saw him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.

Myrtle pulled her chair close to mine, and suddenly her warm breath poured over me the story of her first meeting with Tom.

Picture of a Party

"It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes, and I couldn't keep my eyes off him, but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me, and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm, and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever; you can't live forever.'"

She turned to Mrs. McKee and the room rang full of her artificial laughter.

"My dear," she cried. "I'm going to give you this dress as soon as I'm through with it. I've got to get another one to-morrow. I'm going to make a list of all the things I've got to get. A massage and a wave, and a collar for the dog, and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother's grave that'll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won't forget all the things I got to do."

It was nine o'clock—almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten. Mr. McKee was asleep on a chair with his fists clenched in his lap, like a photograph of a man of action. Taking out my handkerchief I wiped from his cheek the spot of dried lather that had worried me all the afternoon.

The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke, and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing, in impassioned voices, whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. "I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai—"

John Dos Passos

Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.

Then there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor, and women's voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain. Mr. McKee awoke from his doze and started in a daze toward the door. When he had gone half way he turned around and stared at the scene—his wife and Catherine scolding and consoling as they stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture with articles of aid, and the despairing figure on the couch, bleeding fluently, and trying to spread a copy of *Town Tattle* over the tapestry scenes of Versailles. Then Mr. McKee turned and continued on out the door. Taking my hat from the chandelier, I followed.

"Come to lunch some day," he suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator.

"Where?"

"Anywhere."

"Keep your hands off the lever," snapped the elevator boy.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. McKee with dignity, "I didn't know I was touching it."

"All right," I agreed, "I'll be glad to."

. . . I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands.

"Beauty and the Beast . . . Loneliness . . . Old Grocery Horse . . . Brook'n Bridge. . . ."

Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning Tribune, and waiting for the four o'clock train.

WESTBROOK PEGLER:

“I wish I had written
One Is a Wanderer

by JAMES THURBER”

The American public knows well the name of Westbrook Pegler, the brilliant editorial columnist and winner of the 1941 Pulitzer award for reporting. Although Mr. Pegler is not known to be a writer of fiction, his inclination toward it may be seen in his narratives of events in the life of GEORGE SPELVIN, AMERICAN and in many of his columns.

THE walk up Fifth Avenue through the slush of the sidewalks and the dankness of the air had tired him. The dark was coming quickly down, the dark of a February Sunday evening, and that vaguely perturbed him. He didn't want to go “home,” though, and get out of it. It would be gloomy and close in his hotel room, and his soiled shirts would be piled on the floor of the closet where he had been flinging them for weeks, where he had been flinging them for months, and his papers would be disarranged on the tops of the tables and on the desk, and his pipes would be lying around, the pipes he had smoked determinedly for a while only to give them up, as he always did, to go back to cigarettes. He turned into the street leading to his hotel, walking slowly, trying to decide what to do with the night. He had had too many nights alone. Once he had enjoyed being alone. Now it was hard to be alone. He couldn't read any more, or write, at night. Books he tossed aside after nervously flipping through them; the writing he tried to do turned into spirals and circles and squares and empty faces.

I'll just stop in, he thought, and see if there are any messages; I'll

Permission of the author and *The New Yorker*. Copyright 1935 by The F-R. Publishing Corporation.

Westbrook Pegler

see if there have been any phone calls. He hadn't been back to the hotel, after all, for—let's see—for almost five hours; just wandering around. There might be some messages. I'll just stop in, he thought, and see; and maybe I'll have one brandy. I don't want to sit there in the lobby again and drink brandy; I don't want to do that.

He didn't go through the revolving doors of the hotel, though. He went on past the hotel and over to Broadway. A man asked him for some money. A shabbily dressed woman walked by, muttering. She had what he called the New York Mouth, a grim, set mouth, a strained, querulous mouth, a mouth that told of suffering and discontent. He looked in the window of a cane-and-umbrella shop and in the window of a cheap restaurant, a window holding artificial pie and cake, a cup of cold coffee, a plate of artificial vegetables. He got into the shoving and pushing and halting and slow flowing of Broadway. A big cop with a red face was striking his hands together and kidding with a couple of girls whom he had kept from crossing the street against a red light. A thin man in a thin overcoat watched them out of thin, emotionless eyes.

It was a momentary diversion to stand in front of the book counter in the drugstore at Forty-fifth Street and Broadway and look at the books, cheap editions of ancient favorites, movie editions of fairly recent best-sellers. He picked up some of the books and opened them and put them down again, but there was nothing he wanted to read. He walked over to the soda counter and sat down and asked for hot chocolate. It warmed him up a little and he thought about going to the movie at the Paramount; it was a movie with action and guns and airplanes, and Myrna Loy, the kind of movie that didn't bother you. He walked down to the theatre and stood there a minute, but he didn't buy a ticket. After all, he had been to one movie that day. He thought about going to the office. It would be quiet there, nobody would be there; maybe he could get some work done; maybe he could answer some of the letters he had been putting off for so long.

It was too gloomy, it was too lonely. He looked around the office for a while, sat down at his typewriter, tapped out the alphabet on a

One Is a Wanderer

sheet of paper, took a paper-clip, straightened it, cleaned the “e” and the “o” on the typewriter, and put the cover over it. He never remembered to put the cover over the typewriter when he left in the evening. I never, as a matter of fact, remember anything, he thought. It is because I keep trying not to; I keep trying not to remember anything. It is an empty and cowardly thing, not to remember. It might lead you anywhere; no, it might stop you, it might stop you from getting anywhere. Out of remembrance comes everything; out of remembrance comes a great deal, anyway. You can’t do anything if you don’t let yourself remember things. He began to whistle a song because he found himself about to remember things, and he knew what things they would be, things that would bring a grimace to his mouth and to his eyes, disturbing fragments of old sentences, old scenes and gestures, hours, and rooms, and tones of voice, and the sound of a voice crying. All voices cry differently; there are no two voices in the whole world that cry alike; they’re like footsteps and fingerprints and the faces of friends. . . .

He became conscious of the song he was whistling. He got up from the chair in front of his covered typewriter, turned out the light, and walked out of the room to the elevator, and there he began to sing the last part of the song, waiting for the elevator. “Make my bed and light the light, for I’ll be home late tonight, blackbird, bye, bye.” He walked over to his hotel through the slush and the damp gloom and sat down in a chair in the lobby, without taking off his overcoat. He didn’t want to sit there long.

“Good evening, sir,” said the waiter who looked after the guests in the lobby. “How are you?”

“I’m fine, thank you,” he said, “I’m fine. I’ll have a brandy, with water on the side.”

He had several brandies. Nobody came into the lobby that he knew. People were gone to all kinds of places Sunday night. He hadn’t looked at his letter box back of the clerk’s desk when he came in, to see if there were any messages there. That was a kind of game he played, or something. He never looked for messages until after he had had a brandy. He’d look now after he had another brandy.

Westbrook Pegler

He had another brandy and looked. "Nothing," said the clerk at the desk, looking too.

He went back to his chair in the lobby and began to think about calling up people. He thought of the Graysons. He saw the Graysons, not as they would be, sitting in their apartment, close together and warmly, but as he and Lydia had seen them in another place and another year. The four had shared a bright vacation once. He remembered various attitudes and angles and lights and colors of that vacation. There is something about four people, two couples, that like each other and get along; that have a swell time; that grow in intimacy and understanding. One's life is made up of twos, and of fours. The Graysons understood the nice little arrangements of living, the twos and fours. Two is company, four is a party, three is a crowd. One is a wanderer.

No, not the Graysons. Somebody would be there on Sunday night, some couple, some two; somebody he knew, somebody they had known. That is the way life is arranged. One arranges one's life—no, two arrange their life—in terms of twos, and fours, and sixes. Marriage does not make two people one, it makes two people two. It's sweeter that way, and simpler. All this, he thought, summoning the waiter, is probably very silly and sentimental. I must look out that I don't get to that state of tipsiness where all silly and lugubrious things seem brilliant divinations of mine, sound and original ideas and theories. What I must remember is that such things are sentimental and tiresome and grow out of not working enough and out of too much brandy. That's what I must remember. It is no good remembering that it takes four to make a party, two to make a house.

People living alone, after all, have made a great many things. Let's see, what have people living alone made? Not love, of course, but a great many other things: money, for example, and black marks on white paper. "Make this one a double-brandy," he told the waiter. Let's see, who that I *know* has made something alone, who that I know of has made something alone? Robert Browning? No, not Robert Browning. Odd, that Robert Browning would be the first person he thought of. "And had you only heard me play one tune,

One Is a Wanderer

or viewed me from a window, not so soon with you would such things fade as with the rest." He had written that line of Browning's in a book once for Lydia, or Lydia had written it in a book for him; or they had both written it in a book for each other. "Not so soon with you would such things fade as with the rest." Maybe he didn't have it exactly right; it was hard to remember now, after so long a time. It didn't matter. "Not so soon with you would such things fade as with the rest." The fact is that all things do fade; with twos, and with fours; all bright things, all attitudes and angles and lights and colors, all growing in intimacy and understanding.

I think maybe I'll call the Bradleys, he thought, getting up out of his chair. And don't, he said to himself, standing still a moment, don't tell me you're not cockeyed now, because you are cockeyed now, just as you said you wouldn't be when you got up this morning and had orange juice and coffee and determined to get some work done, a whole lot of work done; just as you said you wouldn't be but you knew you would be, all right. You knew you would be, all right.

The Bradleys, he thought, as he walked slowly around the lobby, avoiding the phone booths, glancing at the headlines of the papers on the newsstand, the Bradleys have that four-square thing, that two-square thing—that two-square thing, God damn them! Somebody described it once in a short story that he had read: an intimacy that you could feel, that you could almost take hold of, when you went into such a house, when you went into where such people were, a warming thing, a nice thing to be in, like being in warm sea water; a little embarrassing, too, yes, damned embarrassing, too. He would only take a damp blanket into that warmth. That's what I'd take into that warmth, he told himself, a damp blanket. They know it, too. Here comes old Kirk again with his damp blanket. It isn't because I'm so damned unhappy—I'm not so damned unhappy—it's because they're so damned happy, damn them. Why don't they know that? Why don't they do something about it? What right have they got to flaunt it at me, for God's sake? . . . Look here now, he told himself, you're getting too cockeyed now; you're getting into one of

Westbrook Pegler

those states, you're getting into one of those states that Marianne keeps telling you about, one of those states when people don't like to have you around. . . . Marianne, he thought. He went back to his chair, ordered another brandy, and thought about Marianne.

She doesn't know how I start my days, he thought, she only knows how I end them. She doesn't even know how I started my life. She only knows me when night gets me. If I could only be the person she wants me to be, why, then I would be fine, I would be the person she wants me to be. Like ordering a new dress from a shop, a new dress that nobody ever wore, a new dress that nobody's ever going to wear but you. I wouldn't get mad suddenly, about nothing. I wouldn't walk out of places suddenly, about nothing. I wouldn't snarl at nice people. About what she says is nothing. I wouldn't be "unbearable." Her word "unbearable." A female word, female as a cat. Well, she's right, too. I am unbearable. "George," he said to the waiter, "I am unbearable, did you know that?" "No, sir, I did not, sir," said the waiter. "I would not call you unbearable, Mr. Kirk." "Well, you don't know, George," he said. "It just happens that I am unbearable. It just happened that way. It's a long story." "Yes, sir," said the waiter.

I could call up the Mortons, he thought. They'll have twos and fours there, too, but they're not so damned happy that they're unbearable. The Mortons are all right. Now look, the Mortons had said to him, if you and Marianne would only stop fighting and arguing and forever analyzing yourselves and forever analyzing everything, you'd be fine. You'd be fine if you got married and just shut up, just shut up and got married. That would be fine. Yes, sir, that would be fine. Everything would work out all right. You just shut up and get married, you just get married and shut up. Everybody knows that. It is practically the simplest thing in the world. . . . Well, it would be, too, if you were twenty-five maybe; it would be if you were twenty-five, and not forty.

"George," he said, when the waiter walked over for his empty glass, "I will be forty-one next November." "But that's not old, sir, and that's a long way off," said George. "No, it isn't," he said. "It's

One Is a Wanderer

almost here. So is forty-two and forty-three and fifty, and here I am trying to be—do you know what I'm trying to be, George? I'm trying to be happy." "We all want to be happy, sir," said George. "I would like to see you happy, sir." "Oh, you will," he said. "You will, George. There's a simple trick to it. You just shut up and get married. But you see, George, I am an analyzer. I am also a rememberer. I have a pocketful of old used years. You put all those things together and they sit in a lobby getting silly and old." "I'm very sorry, sir," said George.

"And I'll have one more drink, George," he called after the waiter.

He had one more drink. When he looked up at the clock in the lobby it was only 9:30. He went up to his room and, feeling sleepy, he lay down on his bed without turning out the overhead light. When he woke up it was 12:30 by his wristwatch. He got up and washed his face and brushed his teeth and put on a clean shirt and another suit and went back down into the lobby, without looking at the disarranged papers on the tables and on the desk. He went into the dining-room and had some soup and a lamb chop and a glass of milk. There was nobody there he knew. He began to realize that he had to see somebody he knew. He paid his check and went out and got into a cab and gave the driver an address on Fifty-third Street.

There were several people in Dick and Joe's that he knew. There were Dick and Joe, for two—or, rather, for one, because he always thought of them as one; he could never tell them apart. There were Bill Vardon and Mary Wells. Bill Vardon and Mary Wells were a little drunk and gay. He didn't know them very well, but he could sit down with them. . . .

It was after three o'clock when he left the place and got into a cab. "How are you tonight, Mr. Kirk?" asked the driver. The driver's name was Willie. "I'm fine tonight, Willie," he said. "You want to go on somewhere else?" asked Willie. "Not tonight, Willie," he said. "I'm going home." "Well," said Willie, "I guess you're right there, Mr. Kirk. I guess you're right about that. These places is all right for what they are—you know what I mean—it's O.K. to kick

Westbrook Pegler

around in 'em for a while and maybe have a few drinks with your friends, but when you come right down to it, home is the best place there is. Now, you take me, I'm hackin' for ten years, mostly up around here—because why? Because all these places know me; you know that, Mr. Kirk. I can get into 'em you might say the same way you do, Mr. Kirk—I have me a couple drinks in Dick and Joe's maybe or in Tony's or anywhere else I want to go into—hell, I've had drinks in 'em with you, Mr. Kirk—like on Christmas night, remember? But I got a home over in Brooklyn and a wife and a couple kids and, boy, I'm tellin' you that's the best place, you know what I mean?"

"You're right, Willie," he said. "You're absolutely right, there."

"You're darn tootin' I am," said Willie. "These joints is all right when a man wants a couple drinks or maybe even get a little tight with his friends, that's O.K. with me—"

"Getting tight with friends is O.K. with me, too," he said to Willie.

"But when a man gets fed up on that kind of stuff, a man wants to go home. Am I right, Mr. Kirk?"

"You're absolutely right, Willie," he said. "A man wants to go home."

"Well, here we are, Mr. Kirk. Home it is."

He got out of the cab and gave the driver a dollar and told him to keep the change and went into the lobby of the hotel. The night clerk gave him his key and then put two fingers into the recesses of the letter box. "Nothing," said the night clerk.

When he got to his room, he lay down on the bed a while and smoked a cigarette. He found himself feeling drowsy and he got up. He began to take his clothes off, feeling drowsily contented, mistily contented. He began to sing, not loudly, because the man in 711 would complain. The man in 711 was a gray-haired man, living alone . . . an analyzer . . . a rememberer . . .

"Make my bed and light the light, for I'll be home late tonight . . ."

H. I. PHILLIPS:

"I wish I had written

Butch Minds the Baby

by DAMON RUNYON"

H. I. Phillips, the humorist whose eye merrily surveys the daily scene in his syndicated column, has among other books of humor, the following to his credit: THE PRIVATE PAPERS OF PRIVATE PURKY, ON WHITE OR RYE, and ALL-OUT ARLENE. Of this story by another humorist of the press, Mr. Phillips says: "I selected Damon Runyon's story because it seemed to me one of the most original I had read in years. To me it was also extremely funny, brief, full of action and told as only Runyon can tell a yarn. And then, too, I am a sucker for a Runyon job."

ONE evening along about seven o'clock I am sitting in Mindy's restaurant putting on the gefillte fish, which is a dish I am very fond of, when in comes three parties from Brooklyn wearing caps as follows: Harry the Horse, Little Isadore and Spanish John.

Now these parties are not such parties as I will care to have much truck with, because I often hear rumors about them that are very discreditable, even if the rumors are not true. In fact, I hear that many citizens of Brooklyn will be very glad indeed to see Harry the Horse, Little Isadore and Spanish John move away from there, as they are always doing something that is considered a knock to the community, such as robbing people, or maybe shooting or stabbing them, and throwing pineapples, and carrying on generally.

I am really much surprised to see these parties on Broadway, as it is well known that the Broadway coppers just naturally love to shove such parties around, but here they are in Mindy's, and there

From *Guys and Dolls*. Copyright 1930, 1931, by Damon Runyon, reprinted by permission of J. B. Lippincott Company, publishers.

H. I. Phillips

I am, so of course I give them a very large hello, as I never wish to seem inhospitable, even to Brooklyn parties. Right away they come over to my table and sit down, and Little Isadore reaches out and spears himself a big hunk of my gefillte fish with his fingers, but I overlook this, as I am using the only knife on the table.

Then they all sit there looking at me without saying anything, and the way they look at me makes me very nervous indeed. Finally I figure that maybe they are a little embarrassed being in a high-class spot such as Mindy's, with legitimate people around and about, so I say to them, very polite:

“It is a nice night.”

“What is nice about it?” asks Harry the Horse, who is a thin man with a sharp face and sharp eyes.

Well, now that it is put up to me in this way, I can see there is nothing so nice about the night, at that, so I try to think of something else jolly to say, while Little Isadore keeps spearing at my gefillte fish with his fingers, and Spanish John nabs one of my potatoes.

“Where does Big Butch live?” Harry the Horse asks.

“Big Butch?” I say, as if I never hear the name before in my life, because in this man's town it is never a good idea to answer any question without thinking it over, as some time you may give the right answer to the wrong guy, or the wrong answer to the right guy. “Where does Big Butch live?” I ask them again.

“Yes, where does he live?” Harry the Horse says, very impatient. “We wish you to take us to him.”

“Now wait a minute, Harry,” I say, and I am now more nervous than somewhat. “I am not sure I remember the exact house Big Butch lives in, and furthermore I am not sure Big Butch will care to have me bringing people to see him, especially three at a time, and especially from Brooklyn. You know Big Butch has a very bad disposition, and there is no telling what he may say to me if he does not like the idea of me taking you to him.”

“Everything is very kosher,” Harry the Horse says. “You need not be afraid of anything whatever. We have a business proposition

Butch Minds the Baby

for Big Butch. It means a nice score for him, so you take us to him at once, or the chances are I will have to put the arm on somebody around here."

Well, as the only one around there for him to put the arm on at this time seems to be me, I can see where it will be good policy for me to take these parties to Big Butch, especially as the last of my gefillte fish is just going down Little Isadore's gullet, and Spanish John is finishing up my potatoes, and is donking a piece of rye bread in my coffee, so there is nothing more for me to eat.

So I lead them over into West Forty-ninth Street, near Tenth Avenue, where Big Butch lives on the ground floor of an old brown-stone-front house, and who is sitting out on the stoop but Big Butch himself. In fact, everybody in the neighborhood is sitting out on the front stoops over there, including women and children, because sitting out on the front stoops is quite a custom in this section.

Big Butch is peeled down to his undershirt and pants, and he has no shoes on his feet, as Big Butch is a guy who likes his comfort. Furthermore, he is smoking a cigar, and laid out on the stoop beside him on a blanket is a little baby with not much clothes on. This baby seems to be asleep, and every now and then Big Butch fans it with a folded newspaper to shoo away the mosquitoes that wish to nibble on the baby. These mosquitoes come across the river from the Jersey side on hot nights and they seem to be very fond of babies.

"Hello, Butch," I say, as we stop in front of the stoop.

"Sh-h-h-h!" Butch says, pointing at the baby, and making more noise with his shush than an engine blowing off steam. Then he gets up and tiptoes down to the sidewalk where we are standing, and I am hoping that Butch feels all right, because when Butch does not feel so good he is apt to be very short with one and all. He is a guy of maybe six foot two and a couple of feet wide, and he has big hairy hands and a mean look.

In fact, Big Butch is known all over this man's town as a guy you must not monkey with in any respect, so it takes plenty of weight off of me when I see that he seems to know the parties from Brooklyn, and nods at them very friendly, especially at Harry the Horse. And

H. I. Phillips

right away Harry states a most surprising proposition to Big Butch.

It seems that there is a big coal company which has an office in an old building down in West Eighteenth Street, and in this office is a safe, and in this safe is the company pay-roll of twenty thousand dollars cash money. Harry the Horse knows the money is there because a personal friend of his who is the paymaster for the company puts it there late this very afternoon.

It seems that the paymaster enters into a dicker with Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John for them to slug him while he is carrying the pay-roll from the bank to the office in the afternoon, but something happens that they miss connections on the exact spot, so the paymaster has to carry the sugar on to the office without being slugged, and there it is now in two fat bundles.

Personally, it seems to me as I listen to Harry's story that the paymaster must be a very dishonest character to be making deals to hold still while he is being slugged and the company's sugar taken away from him, but of course it is none of my business, so I take no part in the conversation.

Well, it seems that Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John wish to get the money out of the safe, but none of them knows anything about opening safes, and while they are standing around over in Brooklyn talking over what is to be done in this emergency Harry suddenly remembers that Big Butch is once in the business of opening safes for a living.

In fact, I hear afterwards that Big Butch is considered the best safe opener east of the Mississippi River in his day, but the law finally takes to sending him to Sing Sing for opening these safes, and after he is in and out of Sing Sing three different times for opening safes Butch gets sick and tired of the place, especially as they pass what is called the Baumes Law in New York, which is a law that says if a guy is sent to Sing Sing four times hand running, he must stay there the rest of his life, without any argument about it.

So Big Butch gives up opening safes for a living, and goes into business in a small way, such as running beer, and handling a little Scotch now and then, and becomes an honest citizen. Furthermore,

Butch Minds the Baby

he marries one of the neighbor's children over on the West Side by the name of Mary Murphy, and I judge the baby on this stoop comes of this marriage between Big Butch and Mary because I can see that it is a very homely baby, indeed. Still, I never see many babies that I consider rose geraniums for looks, anyway.

Well, it finally comes out that the idea of Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John is to get Big Butch to open the coal company's safe and take the pay-roll money out, and they are willing to give him fifty per cent of the money for his bother, taking fifty per cent for themselves for finding the plant, and paying all the overhead, such as the paymaster, out of their bit, which strikes me as a pretty fair sort of deal for Big Butch. But Butch only shakes his head.

"It is old-fashioned stuff," Butch says. "Nobody opens pete boxes for a living any more. They make the boxes too good, and they are all wired up with alarms and are a lot of trouble generally. I am in a legitimate business now and going along. You boys know I cannot stand another fall, what with being away three times already, and in addition to this I must mind the baby. My old lady goes to Mrs. Clancy's wake tonight up in the Bronx, and the chances are she will be there all night, as she is very fond of wakes, so I must mind little John Ignatius Junior."

"Listen, Butch," Harry the Horse says, "this is a very soft pete. It is old-fashioned, and you can open it with a toothpick. There are no wires on it, because they never put more than a dime in it before in years. It just happens they have to put the twenty G's in it tonight because my pal the paymaster makes it a point not to get back from the jug with the scratch in time to pay off today, especially after he sees we miss out on him. It is the softest touch you will ever know, and where can a guy pick up ten G's like this?"

I can see that Big Butch is thinking the ten G's over very seriously, at that, because in these times nobody can afford to pass up ten G's, especially a guy in the beer business, which is very, very tough just now. But finally he shakes his head again and says like this:

"No," he says, "I must let it go, because I must mind the baby. My old lady is very, very particular about this, and I dast not leave

H. I. Phillips

little John Ignatius Junior for a minute. If Mary comes home and finds I am not minding the baby she will put the blast on me plenty. I like to turn a few honest bobs now and then as well as anybody, but," Butch says, "John Ignatius Junior comes first with me."

Then he turns away and goes back to the stoop as much as to say he is through arguing, and sits down beside John Ignatius Junior again just in time to keep a mosquito from carrying off one of John's legs. Anybody can see that Big Butch is very fond of this baby, though personally I will not give you a dime a dozen for babies, male and female.

Well, Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John are very much disappointed, and stand around talking among themselves, and paying no attention to me, when all of a sudden Spanish John, who never has much to say up to this time, seems to have a bright idea. He talks to Harry and Isadore, and they get all pleased up over what he has to say, and finally Harry goes to Big Butch.

"Sh-h-h-h!" Big Butch says, pointing to the baby as Harry opens his mouth.

"Listen, Butch," Harry says in a whisper, "we can take the baby with us, and you can mind it and work, too."

"Why," Big Butch whispers back, "this is quite an idea indeed. Let us go into the house and talk things over."

So he picks up the baby and leads us into his joint, and gets out some pretty fair beer, though it is needled a little, at that, and we sit around the kitchen chewing the fat in whispers. There is a crib in the kitchen, and Butch puts the baby in this crib, and it keeps on snoozing away first rate while we are talking. In fact, it is sleeping so sound that I am commencing to figure that Butch must give it some of the needled beer he is feeding us, because I am feeling a little dopey myself.

Finally Butch says that as long as he can take John Ignatius Junior with him he sees no reason why he shall not go and open the safe for them, only he says he must have five per cent more to put in the baby's bank when he gets back, so as to round himself up with his ever-loving wife in case of a beef from her over keeping the baby

Butch Minds the Baby

out in the night air. Harry the Horse says he considers this extra five per cent a little strong, but Spanish John, who seems to be a very square guy, says that after all it is only fair to cut the baby in if it is to be with them when they are making the score, and Little Isadore seems to think this is all right, too. So Harry the Horse gives in, and says five per cent it is.

Well, as they do not wish to start out until after midnight, and as there is plenty of time, Big Butch gets out some more needled beer, and then he goes looking for the tools with which he opens safes, and which he says he does not see since the day John Ignatius Junior is born and he gets them out to build the crib.

Now this is a good time for me to bid one and all farewell, and what keeps me there is something I cannot tell you to this day, because personally I never before have any idea of taking part in a safe opening, especially with a baby, as I consider such actions very dishonorable. When I come to think things over afterwards, the only thing I can figure is the needled beer, but I wish to say I am really very much surprised at myself when I find myself in a taxicab along about one o'clock in the morning with these Brooklyn parties and Big Butch and the baby.

Butch has John Ignatius Junior rolled up in a blanket, and John is still pounding his ear. Butch has a satchel of tools, and what looks to me like a big flat book, and just before we leave the house Butch hands me a package and tells me to be very careful with it. He gives Little Isadore a smaller package, which Isadore shoves into his pistol pocket, and when Isadore sits down in the taxi something goes wa-wa, like a sheep, and Big Butch becomes very indignant because it seems Isadore is sitting on John Ignatius Junior's doll, which says "Mamma" when you squeeze it.

It seems Big Butch figures that John Ignatius Junior may wish something to play with in case he wakes up, and it is a good thing for Little Isadore that the mamma doll is not squashed so it cannot say "Mamma" any more, or the chances are Little Isadore will get a good bust in the snoot.

We let the taxicab go a block away from the spot we are headed

H. I. Phillips

for in West Eighteenth Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, and walk the rest of the way two by two. I walk with Big Butch, carrying my package, and Butch is lugging the baby and his satchel and the flat thing that looks like a book. It is so quiet down in West Eighteenth Street at such an hour that you can hear yourself think, and in fact I hear myself thinking very plain that I am a big sap to be on a job like this, especially with a baby, but I keep going just the same, which shows you what a very big sap I am, indeed.

There are very few people in West Eighteenth Street when we get there, and one of them is a fat guy who is leaning against a building almost in the center of the block, and who takes a walk for himself as soon as he sees us. It seems that this fat guy is the watchman at the coal company's office and is also a personal friend of Harry the Horse, which is why he takes the walk when he sees us coming.

It is agreed before we leave Big Butch's house that Harry the Horse and Spanish John are to stay outside the place as lookouts, while Big Butch is inside opening the safe, and that Little Isadore is to go with Butch. Nothing whatever is said by anybody about where I am to be at any time, and I can see that, no matter where I am, I will still be an outsider, but, as Butch gives me the package to carry, I figure he wishes me to remain with him.

It is no bother at all getting into the office of the coal company, which is on the ground floor, because it seems the watchman leaves the front door open, this watchman being a most obliging guy, indeed. In fact he is so obliging that by and by he comes back and lets Harry the Horse and Spanish John tie him up good and tight, and stick a handkerchief in his mouth and chuck him in an areaway next to the office, so nobody will think he has anything to do with opening the safe in case anybody comes around asking.

The office looks out on the street, and the safe that Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John wish Big Butch to open is standing up against the rear wall of the office facing the street windows. There is one little electric light burning very dim over the safe so that when anybody walks past the place outside, such as a watch-

Butch Minds the Baby

man, they can look in through the window and see the safe at all times, unless they are blind. It is not a tall safe, and it is not a big safe, and I can see Big Butch grin when he sees it, so I figure this safe is not much of a safe, just as Harry the Horse claims.

Well, as soon as Big Butch and the baby and Little Isadore and me get into the office, Big Butch steps over to the safe and unfolds what I think is the big flat book, and what is it but a sort of screen painted on one side to look exactly like the front of a safe. Big Butch stands this screen up on the floor in front of the real safe, leaving plenty of space in between, the idea being that the screen will keep anyone passing in the street outside from seeing Butch while he is opening the safe, because when a man is opening a safe he needs all the privacy he can get.

Big Butch lays John Ignatius Junior down on the floor on the blanket behind the phony safe front and takes his tools out of the satchel and starts to work opening the safe, while Little Isadore and me get back in a corner where it is dark, because there is not room for all of us back of the screen. However, we can see what Big Butch is doing, and I wish to say while I never before see a professional safe opener at work, and never wish to see another, this Butch handles himself like a real artist.

He starts drilling into the safe around the combination lock, working very fast and very quiet, when all of a sudden what happens but John Ignatius Junior sits up on the blanket and lets out a squall. Naturally this is most disquieting to me, and personally I am in favor of beaning John Ignatius Junior with something to make him keep still, because I am nervous enough as it is. But the squalling does not seem to bother Big Butch. He lays down his tools and picks up John Ignatius Junior and starts whispering, "There, there, there, my itty oddleums. Da-dad is here."

Well, this sounds very nonsensical to me in such a situation, and it makes no impression whatever on John Ignatius Junior. He keeps on squalling, and I judge he is squalling pretty loud because I see Harry the Horse and Spanish John both walk past the window and look in very anxious. Big Butch jiggles John Ignatius Junior up and

H. I. Phillips

down and keeps whispering baby talk to him, which sounds very undignified coming from a high-class safe opener, and finally Butch whispers to me to hand him the package I am carrying.

He opens the package, and what is in it but a baby's nursing bottle full of milk. Moreover, there is a little tin stew pan, and Butch hands the pan to me and whispers to me to find a water tap somewhere in the joint and fill the pan with water. So I go stumbling around in the dark in a room behind the office and bark my shins several times before I find a tap and fill the pan. I take it back to Big Butch, and he squats there with the baby on one arm, and gets a tin of what is called canned heat out of the package and lights this canned heat with his cigar lighter, and starts heating the pan of water with the nursing bottle in it.

Big Butch keeps sticking his finger in the pan of water while it is heating, and by and by he puts the rubber nipple of the nursing bottle in his mouth and takes a pull at it to see if the milk is warm enough, just like I see dolls who have babies do. Apparently the milk is okay, as Butch hands the bottle to John Ignatius Junior, who grabs hold of it with both hands and starts sucking on the business end. Naturally he has to stop squalling, and Big Butch goes to work on the safe again, with John Ignatius Junior sitting on the blanket, pulling on the bottle and looking wiser than a treeful of owls.

It seems the safe is either a tougher job than anybody figures, or Big Butch's tools are not so good, what with being old and rusty and used for building baby cribs, because he breaks a couple of drills and works himself up into quite a sweat without getting anywhere. Butch afterwards explains to me that he is one of the first guys in this country to open safes without explosives, but he says to do this work properly you have to know the safes so as to drill to the tumblers of the lock just right, and it seems that this particular safe is a new type to him, even if it is old, and he is out of practice.

Well, in the meantime John Ignatius Junior finishes his bottle and starts mumbling again, and Big Butch gives him a tool to play with, and finally Butch needs this tool and tries to take it away from John Ignatius Junior, and the baby lets out such a squawk that Butch has

Butch Minds the Baby

to let him keep it until he can sneak it away from him, and this causes more delay.

Finally Big Butch gives up trying to drill the safe open, and he whispers to us that he will have to put a little shot in it to loosen up the lock, which is all right with us, because we are getting tired of hanging around and listening to John Ignatius Junior's glug-glugging. As far as I am personally concerned, I am wishing I am home in bed.

Well, Butch starts pawing through his satchel looking for something and it seems that what he is looking for is a little bottle of some kind of explosive with which to shake the lock on the safe up some, and at first he cannot find this bottle, but finally he discovers that John Ignatius Junior has it and is gnawing at the cork, and Butch has quite a battle making John Ignatius Junior give it up.

Anyway, he fixes the explosive in one of the holes he drills near the combination lock on the safe, and then he puts in a fuse, and just before he touches off the fuse Butch picks up John Ignatius Junior and hands him to Little Isadore, and tells us to go into the room behind the office. John Ignatius Junior does not seem to care for Little Isadore, and I do not blame him, at that, because he starts to squirm around quite some in Isadore's arms and lets out a squall, but all of a sudden he becomes very quiet indeed, and, while I am not able to prove it, something tells me that Little Isadore has his hand over John Ignatius Junior's mouth.

Well, Big Butch joins us right away in the back room, and sound comes out of John Ignatius Junior again as Butch takes him from Little Isadore, and I am thinking that it is a good thing for Isadore that the baby cannot tell Big Butch what Isadore does to him.

"I put in just a little bit of a shot," Big Butch says, "and it will not make any more noise than snapping your fingers."

But a second later there is a big whoom from the office, and the whole joint shakes, and John Ignatius Junior laughs right out loud. The chances are he thinks it is the Fourth of July.

"I guess maybe I put in too big a charge," Big Butch says, and then he rushes into the office with Little Isadore and me after him,

H. I. Phillips

and John Ignatius Junior still laughing very heartily for a small baby. The door of the safe is swinging loose, and the whole joint looks somewhat wrecked, but Big Butch loses no time in getting his dukes into the safe and grabbing out two big bundles of cash money, which he sticks inside his shirt.

As we go into the street Harry the Horse and Spanish John come running up much excited, and Harry says to Big Butch like this:

"What are you trying to do," he says, "wake up the whole town?"

"Well," Butch says, "I guess maybe the charge is too strong, at that, but nobody seems to be coming, so you and Spanish John walk over to Eighth Avenue, and the rest of us will walk to Seventh, and if you go along quiet, like people minding their own business, it will be all right."

But I judge Little Isadore is tired of John Ignatius Junior's company by this time, because he says he will go with Harry the Horse and Spanish John, and this leaves Big Butch and John Ignatius Junior and me to go the other way. So we start moving, and all of a sudden two cops come tearing around the corner toward which Harry and Isadore and Spanish John are going. The chances are the cops hear the earthquake Big Butch lets off and are coming to investigate.

But the chances are, too, that if Harry the Horse and the other two keep walking along very quietly like Butch tells them to, the coppers will pass them up entirely, because it is not likely that coppers will figure anybody to be opening safes with explosives in this neighborhood. But the minute Harry the Horse sees the coppers he loses his nut, and he outs with the old equalizer and starts blasting away, and what does Spanish John do but get his out, too, and open up.

The next thing anybody knows, the two coppers are down on the ground with slugs in them, but other coppers are coming from every which direction, blowing whistles and doing a little blasting themselves, and there is plenty of excitement, especially when the coppers who are not chasing Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John start poking around the neighborhood and find Harry's pal,

Butch Minds the Baby

the watchman, all tied up nice and tight where Harry leaves him, and the watchman explains that some scoundrels blow open the safe he is watching.

All this time Big Butch and me are walking in the other direction toward Seventh Avenue, and Big Butch has John Ignatius in his arms, and John Ignatius is now squalling very loud, indeed. The chances are he is still thinking of the big whoom back there which tickles him so and is wishing to hear some more whooms. Anyway, he is beating his own best record for squalling, and as we go walking along Big Butch says to me like this:

"I dast not run," he says, "because if any coppers see me running they will start popping at me and maybe hit John Ignatius Junior, and besides running will joggle the milk up in him and make him sick. My old lady always warns me never to joggle John Ignatius Junior when he is full of milk."

"Well, Butch," I say, "there is no milk in me, and I do not care if I am joggled up, so if you do not mind, I will start doing a piece of running at the next corner."

But just then around the corner of Seventh Avenue toward which we are headed comes two or three coppers with a big fat sergeant with them, and one of the coppers, who is half out of breath as if he has been doing plenty of sprinting, is explaining to the sergeant that somebody blows a safe down the street and shoots a couple of coppers in the getaway.

And there is Big Butch, with John Ignatius Junior in his arms and twenty G's in his shirt front and a tough record behind him, walking right up to them.

I am feeling very sorry, indeed, for Big Butch, and very sorry for myself, too, and I am saying to myself that if I get out of this I will never associate with anyone but ministers of the gospel as long as I live. I can remember thinking that I am getting a better break than Butch, at that, because I will not have to go to Sing Sing for the rest of my life, like him, and I also remember wondering what they will give John Ignatius Junior, who is still tearing off these squalls, with

H. I. Phillips

Big Butch saying, "There, there, there, Daddy's itty woogleums." Then I hear one of the coppers say to the fat sergeant:

"We better nail these guys. They may be in on this."

Well, I can see it is good-by to Butch and John Ignatius Junior and me, as the fat sergeant steps up to Big Butch, but instead of putting the arm on Butch, the fat sergeant only points at John Ignatius Junior and asks very sympathetic:

"Teeth?"

"No," Big Butch says. "Not teeth. Colic. I just get the doctor here out of bed to do something for him, and we are going to a drug store to get some medicine."

Well, naturally I am very much surprised at this statement, because of course I am not a doctor, and if John Ignatius Junior has colic it serves him right, but I am only hoping they do not ask for my degree, when the fat sergeant says:

"Too bad. I know what it is. I got three of them at home. But," he says, "it acts more like it is teeth than colic."

Then as Big Butch and John Ignatius Junior and me go on about our business I hear the fat sergeant say to the copper, very sarcastic:

"Yea, of course a guy is out blowing safes with a baby in his arms! You will make a great detective, you will!"

I do not see Big Butch for several days after I learn that Harry the Horse and Little Isadore and Spanish John get back to Brooklyn all right, except they are a little nicked up here and there from the slugs the coppers toss at them, while the coppers they clip are not damaged so very much. Furthermore, the chances are I will not see Big Butch for several years, if it is left to me, but he comes looking for me one night, and he seems to be all pleasured up about something.

"Say," Big Butch says to me, "you know I never give a copper credit for knowing any too much about anything, but I wish to say that this fat sergeant we run into the other night is a very, very smart duck. He is right about it being teeth that is ailing John Ignatius Junior, for what happens yesterday but John cuts his first tooth."

IRVING STONE:

"I wish I had written

The Campaign of 1856

from FRÉMONT—PATHMARKER OF THE WEST

by ALLAN NEVINS"

Mr. Stone, the biographer whose LUST FOR LIFE, SAILOR ON HORSEBACK, and IMMORTAL WIFE have immortalized in most readable prose Van Gogh, Jack London and Jessie Frémont, has written other books and also writes for Hollywood. Why he wishes he had written this selection is contained in his own words. "This chapter seemed to me, when I first read it for my research on IMMORTAL WIFE, a model of clarity and objective biographical writing. When I went back to read it again just the other day I was delighted to find it even better than I had remembered: for Allan Nevins succeeded in conveying so much of the historical setting and the mood of the time that it becomes our most highly readable and authentic picture of the period."

ELEVATED thus suddenly to a conspicuous political pedestal, chosen by a powerful party as its leader in a great moral crusade, the unexperienced Frémont might have been pardoned some display of awkwardness, at least some tactical misstep. Fifteen years before he had been an obscure, impoverished army lieutenant, without resources or prospects. Now he was rich, famous, and admired, his name written large on the Golden West, the reputed conqueror of California, the dashing young marshal of a gallant cause. It illustrates his modesty and tact that his conduct was exemplary. Frémont had his faults, but lack of taste was never among them. The critical Gideon Welles, in a severe passage written some years after, did him the justice to re-

From FRÉMONT—PATHMARKER OF THE WEST. Copyright 1939 by Allan Nevins. Reprinted by permission of D. Appleton-Century Co., N. Y., publishers.

Irving Stone

member that at this time his public demeanor was winning. "His bearing was very well so far as he appeared before the public. I saw that he was anxious to be elected but not offensively so; he was not obtrusive, but, on the contrary, reserved and retiring." If his part in the campaign was open to criticism, it was on the ground that, with his public views and capacities still largely unknown, he kept too much in the background and made altogether too few statements. The nation was asked to accept this untrained man quite too completely on faith.

From the beginning of the campaign, Frémont and the other leaders had genuine hope of victory, which rapidly mounted as news of an increasing free-soil enthusiasm came in from many parts of the North and West. The strategic elements of the situation, as Greeley insisted, were simple. The Republicans were certain of 114 electoral votes—those of the New England states, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The Democrats were certain of 108 electoral votes from the South and the border states. The doubtful factors were Pennsylvania with 27 electoral votes; Indiana with 13; Illinois with 11; Maryland with 8; New Jersey with 7; and California with 4—that is, 70 in all. Since 149 were sufficient to elect, the Republicans needed only to carry Pennsylvania and Indiana, or Pennsylvania and Illinois, to be victorious. Was this impossible? The best judges thought not.

Three tickets were in the field: Buchanan and Breckinridge for the Democrats; Frémont and Dayton for the Republicans and one section of Know-Nothings; and Millard Fillmore and Donelson for the expiring Whigs and another section of Know-Nothings. The great danger was that Fillmore would draw enough votes from Frémont to defeat him; but, as the canvas proceeded, the energy of the Republican organization surprised even its members.

Throughout the North, indeed, the Republican campaign awakened a fervor recalling the log-cabin campaign of 1840, but possessing a moral character and a degree of statesmanship which the Harrison campaign had lacked. Mass meeting followed mass meeting; torch-light procession, with red fire and marching bands, followed torch-

The Campaign of 1856

light procession. The nomination was immediately "ratified" by gatherings all over the country. Then came a series of tremendous "rallies." Rockwood Hoar and Hannibal Hamlin spoke in Faneuil Hall; Bryant, Franz Sigel, Friedrich Kapp, and Charles A. Dana were heard in the Tabernacle in New York. Little preliminary organization was needed in many parts of the North besides that supplied by the existing Emigrant Aid Societies and other agencies for the relief of Kansas, which already reached into every county and almost every township. The gatherings seemed to spring spontaneously from some pent-up popular feeling. A Frémont demonstration of 25,000 people took place at Massillon, Ohio, another of 30,000 at Kalamazoo, Michigan; and a third of equal size at Beloit, Wisconsin, where the crowds cheered a procession six miles in length. Illinois was not behind her neighbors. Lincoln spoke to 10,000 at Princeton, and at Alton addressed an enormous concourse—some said 35,000 people—brought together by the State Fair; while at Jacksonville Lyman Trumbull reviewed a procession a mile and a quarter long. Perhaps most striking of all was the tremendous Frémont rally in Indianapolis in July, which attracted the most attention.

Here, while cannon roared all day, the procession took hours to pass a given point; a single delegation numbered almost 4,500 men; 50 blaring bands were in line; 25 marshals kept the ranks in order; uncounted gay floats rolled down the streets, the chief carrying 32 young women in white, one for each state, with a 33rd girl in black for bleeding Kansas; hundreds of banners and transparencies waved above the long line; and platoon after platoon of Germans, with their own flags, formed a special section of the pageant. At 5 different stands orators took turns exhorting the crowd to stand fast against slavery and polygamy, against border ruffians and Bully Brooks. That night a huge torch-light procession turned the streets into streams of fire, above which rose the voices of haranguing orators.

The West and North were rallying against slavery with a new ardor. An intense resentment had been aroused in the breasts of millions by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and it was finding a sudden re-

Irving Stone

lease in acclamation of Frémont and the Republican cause. Companies of Wide-Awakes, carrying torches and transparencies, sprang up everywhere. Fife and drum corps shrilled and rattled. Frémont glee clubs shook the village lyceum halls and opera houses. Long lines of gigs and wagons raised the dust on prairie roads as farming people streamed to Frémont picnics and rallies. A powerful array of Republican campaign speakers took the stump. In the East they included Banks, Chase, Greeley, Sumner, William M. Evarts, and John P. Hale, while even the aloof Emerson and the retiring Bryant made speeches. In the West, Schuyler Colfax of Indiana was active, Carl Schurz was busy addressing the Germans, and striplings like Whitelaw Reid were pressed into service. Lincoln, speaking ninety times in all, made some of the ablest addresses he had yet delivered. On every hand, newspapers which for years had been Whig or Democratic were turning to the new party.

Song, slogan, and picture lent their aid in the campaign. Banners were flung across village streets, emblazoned with such devices as "We Follow the Pathfinder"; "We Shall Be Redeemed from the Rule of Nigger Drivers"; "We Are Buck-Hunting"; or with a still bolder pun, "Jessie Bent-on Being Free." The Democrats were taunted as Buchaneers. One slogan was repeated everywhere in Republican newspapers and on Republican posters: "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Soil, Free Men, Frémont and Victory." Jessie played only a slighter part in the campaign than her husband, and "Frémont and Jessie" seemed to constitute the Republican ticket rather than Frémont and Dayton. "We go for our country and Union, and for brave little Jessie forever," ran one ditty. A Philadelphia rally in June popularized a campaign song, chanted to the tune of "Camp-town Races," which spread rapidly all over the North:

There's an old gray horse whose name is Buck; Du da, du da,
His dam was Folly and his sire Bad Luck; Du da, du da day.

Chorus:—We're bound to work all night,
We're bound to work all day,
I'll bet my money on the Mustang Colt,
Will anybody bet on the Gray?

The Campaign of 1856

The Mustang Colt is strong and young, Du da, du da,
His wind is sound and his knees not sprung, Du da, du da day.
The old gray horse when he tries to trot, Du da, du da,
Goes round and round in the same old spot, Du da, du da day.
The mustang goes a killing pace, Du da, du da,
He's bound to win in the four mile race, Du da, du da day.

The most powerful Northern newspapers supported Frémont. In New York he had the loyal assistance of not only the *Tribune*, *Evening Post*, and *Times*, all possessing a national circulation, but also of James Gordon Bennett's *Herald*, which had long been Democratic and which four years later was panic-stricken in its desire to let the South have its way. The Philadelphia *North American*, edited by Morton McMichael, took the Republican side; so did the Chicago *Tribune* of Medill and Horace White. The German press did as valiant service as the German speakers, who included Phillip Dorzheimer, Gustav Koerner, and Schurz. German songs were written, for one of which, by E. V. Scherb, the poet-editor Bryant paid a prize of \$100.

Large lithographed portraits of Frémont, manufactured in New York and retailed at a dollar each, blazed forth in shop-windows and local headquarters. Two extended campaign biographies were prepared, one by John Bigelow, with the aid of Jessie Frémont, which Derby & Jackson of New York sold in huge quantities at a dollar, and one by Charles Wentworth Upham, published by Ticknor & Fields in Boston. The *Tribune* also issued an excellent pamphlet life by Greeley. All the larger newspapers made a special campaign price to summer subscribers. John G. Whittier celebrated Frémont's achievements in his poem, "The Pass of the Sierras," recalling the day when the explorer bade his men press on "and look from Winter's frozen throne on Summer's flowers and grass!" and urging him now to lead the nation into the promised land; while such minor poets as T. B. Read and the Cary sisters lent their pens. Above all, the women of the North enlisted under Frémont's banner as never before in politics, while most of the Protestant clergy of the section boldly used the pulpit to urge his election.

Irving Stone

The Democrats were sufficiently shrewd enough to take the offensive, and their tactics embraced two main sets of operations. Although the Republicans made no attack upon the private character of Buchanan except to insinuate that a bachelor ought not to be President, the Democrats leveled scurrilous charges against Frémont. Their main accusation, made with ceaseless iteration for its effect upon the Know-Nothing vote, was that Frémont was secretly a Catholic. As "proofs," they declared that in his first western expedition he had carved a cross upon Rock Independence; that he and Jessie Benton had been married by a Catholic priest; that he had sent a ward and relative, his niece Nina, to a Catholic school; and that his father was a French Catholic. The New York *Express* fortified these allegations by a half-dozen absurd stories. It declared that he had been seen crossing himself in the Catholic cathedral in Washington, that he had once told a West Point professor that he was a Catholic, and that over a hotel table he had avowed the doctrine of transubstantiation! Of course John Bigelow and others had no difficulty in proving that Frémont was a good Episcopalian. A committee of Protestant clergymen, including several professors at the Union Theological Seminary, called upon Frémont and received proofs that he worshipped at Grace Episcopal Church; that Mrs. Frémont, reared as a Presbyterian, had united with the Episcopal Church on her marriage with him; and that the children had been baptized as Episcopilians.

Nevertheless, these charges did Frémont substantial harm. Schuyler Colfax wrote Bigelow at the end of August that of hundreds of letters from the Northwest, "scarcely any omits a reference to the fact that the Catholic story injures us materially, both in keeping men in the Fillmore ranks who ought to be with us, and in cooling many of our friends who fear from Colonel Frémont's silence and the cloud of rumors on the subject that there may be some truth in it." He added that unfortunately they made nothing on the other side, the Catholics being solidly against the Republicans. So they were, chiefly because they believed the Know-Nothings to be behind Frémont; of nearly forty Catholic journals, not one in July was found on the Republican side.

The Campaign of 1856

At the height of the campaign, some forty Republican leaders, meeting at the Astor House, discussed the charge with Frémont; and Thurlow Weed declared that he ought to make a public disavowal. This the candidate declined to do. He took the position that the main issue of the campaign was freedom, intellectual as well as physical, that under the Constitution no religious belief disqualified a man for office, and that he would not ask for a single vote if in so doing he had to appeal to the religious fanaticism which had long cursed certain nations of Europe. After the conference, he decided to consult James Gordon Bennett. "What are your convictions?" asked the editor, and Frémont told him. "Follow those convictions, Colonel, and I will sustain you," was the reply.

A multitude of other charges, many of them silly, were brought against the explorer. The most abstemious of men, he was accused of being a hard drinker. It was said that he had owned seventy-five slaves, whom he had hired to Colonel Brant of St. Louis. The fact was, of course, that both Frémont and Jessie had again and again declined to accept a single slave from their southern relatives, though often pressed to do so during their privations on the frontier; for both had an unconquerable aversion to slavery. The Democratic press made much of Frémont's financial perplexities. He had signed a note for \$1,891, it said, due in a year, and when the brokers refused to discount it, had offered it to Horace Greeley at 2 per cent a month. Greeley angrily rejoined that in the first place he was not a note-shaver, and in the second everybody knew that he did not have \$1,891! Stories were printed that Frémont was ineligible to the presidency, having been born abroad, and a man came forward who recalled the very house in Montreal in which he had first seen the light! Most painful of all to Frémont's friends, the Democrats seized upon the whole dark story of his mother and her Anna Karenina elopement with a man of her own age, and magnified its unpleasant aspect.

Much more nearly legitimate were the attacks directed against Frémont's military and financial transactions in California. During the previous session of Congress, a foundation for these assaults had

Irving Stone

been laid by Senators Thompson of New Jersey and Bigler of Pennsylvania, who in bitterly partisan speeches raked over all Frémont's campaigns and California contracts. At the same time, the Los Angeles *Star* charged the explorer with cruelty and rapacity in his treatment of the native Californians during and after the Bear Flag War. So far as his share in the American acquisition of the Coast went, the Republicans had a sweeping answer ready. They simply quoted the testimony of Buchanan himself, in the British judicial inquiry into the suits against Frémont in 1852, that "his services were very valuable; he bore a conspicuous part in the conquest of California, and in my opinion is better entitled to be called the conqueror of California than any other man." The answer to the charges of cruelty were equally decisive. At Los Angeles and San José many native Californians, led by Don Pio Pico, signed statements denying them completely and appealing the election of Frémont. Thomas O. Larkin, former American consul, testified that Frémont had lived in his house for weeks or months at a time, from 1850 to 1854. Seeing the explorer at this close range, he had found him "of reserved and distant manners, active and industrious in his official duties, anxious to finish the business on hand and before him and to be on the march to accomplish more"; never coarse or profane; always "polite, kind, and courteous." Larkin concluded with an emphatic sentence: "I consider Mr. Frémont a just, correct, and moral man, abstemious, bold, and persevering."

Nevertheless, in California especially, the history of Frémont's share in the Indian beef contract and his connection with Palmer, Cook & Co., financial agents of the state of California and city of San Francisco, who had defaulted owing those bodies \$100,000, was so retold as to cost the explorer heavily. Actually, he had performed a public service in forestalling a threatened Indian war. But his handling of the contract, his protracted siege of Congress to obtain payment, and his negotiations with his creditors, were all interpreted in hostile manner. The San Francisco *Globe*, in a long and venomous article, reviewed these business affairs and also accused Frémont of complicity with Palmer, Cook & Co., in trying to swindle the public

The Campaign of 1856

in exploiting the Mariposa mines. This article was an adroit tissue of lies. Frémont and his friends did everything in their power to disassociate his name from that of the discredited banking firm, making it clear that he had never been a partner or associate. But many Republicans on the coast feared that there was some basis of truth for the reports.

Dozens of "Bear Clubs" and similar organizations were founded in California to support Frémont—sixteen in San Francisco alone; six or seven newspapers vigorously defended him. Nevertheless, a good deal of the mud stuck. The San Francisco *Bulletin*, James King of William's paper, was friendly toward the Republican nominee. But it declared its firm conviction that "this disreputable firm had lost thousands of votes for Frémont in this state," and that it had injured him more than any other factor.

The second main element in Democratic strategy lay in systematic use of the bogey of secession as a consequence of Frémont's election. Buchanan men declared that the Black Republicans, the party of "free soilers, Frémonters, free niggers, and freebooters," were the first sectional party in our history. Buchanan himself in his letter of acceptance recalled the warning of Washington against political organizations formed upon geographical lines. The Democratic platform repudiated "all sectional parties and platforms concerning domestic slavery," saying that they must eventuate in civil war and disunion. A multitude of patriotic men who disliked slavery as much as Frémont himself were converted to this point of view. One was Thomas Hart Benton, who with his usual high devotion to principle uncompromisingly opposed his son-in-law, and published an open letter attacking the proposed Frémont ticket in Missouri; the whole Republican movement, he said, was accentuating the hostility between the two sections. Denouncing any political party which tried to elect candidates from one part of the Union to rule over the whole of it, he asked if the people believed that the South would submit to such a President as Frémont? "We are treading," he said, "upon a volcano that is liable at any moment to burst forth and overwhelm the nation."

Irving Stone

Numerous Democratic newspapers, like the *Washington Union*, *Richmond Enquirer*, and *Charleston Mercury*, predicted disunion in emphatic terms if Frémont were elected. John Forsyth of Alabama wrote that "the South ought not to submit to it, and will not submit. The government of the United States will be at an end." Preston Brooks, the assailant of Sumner, fierily addressed a great mass meeting at Ninety-Six, South Carolina. "I believe the only hope of the South," he said, "is in dissolving the bonds which connect us with the government—in separating the living body from the dead carcass." If Frémont were actually chosen, he added, the news should be the signal for an instant southern march upon Washington, for it would be a patriotic duty to "lay the strong arm of Southern freemen upon the treasury and archives of the government." Senator Slidell asserted that if the Republicans triumphed, "the Union cannot and ought not to be preserved." Senator Mason declared that only one course would be open—"immediate, absolute, eternal separation." The editor of the *Charleston Mercury* believed that such an event "will be and ought to be the knell of the Union." When John Minor Botts defended the idea of an indissoluble Union, the *Richmond Enquirer* called him a traitor and threatened him with lynching. That the threat of secession was real is evident from a letter that a Southerner, T. Turner, wrote Hamilton Fish in September.

I live farther South, see more and know more of Southern people than you do. Last evening was with Cobb of Ga. and Judge Stuart of Maryland—if I am wrong, they are wrong—they both emphatically declare, and with great calmness, that if Frémont is elected, secession follows fast as soon as they can receive the news. Cobb told me that Georgia has already taken the first step, in anticipation of this crisis, by the enactment of a law by the last Legislature empowering the Gov. to call a state convention, as soon as he might deem it necessary. I saw other Southern gentlemen—who talk precisely in the same way.

While many Republican newspapers and speakers affected to scoff, these secessionist utterances awakened a profound dread among conservative Northerners. Bryant's *Evening Post* felt it necessary to publish long editorials assuring the nation that Frémont was not a

The Campaign of 1856

radical, and would not countenance Sumner in his denunciation of the South, or Seward in his insistence upon repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act. An impressive list of northern Whigs were so affected by the southern threats that they aligned themselves with Buchanan, and appealed to the voters to take the same position. Rufus Choate, in a long public letter, well reasoned and well written, declared that it was the first duty of Whigs "to defeat and dissolve the new geographical party," and that in these circumstances he would vote for Buchanan. Webster's son Fletcher violently assailed the new party, and so did James B. Clay, son of Henry Clay. Such other old-time Whigs as Caleb Cushing, Robert Winthrop, and Amos A. Lawrence, all influential, took their stand by Choate to "prevent the madness of the times from working its maddest act." Meanwhile, Wendell Phillips gloried in the sectional nature of the new party, and asked why the North had never before dared to assert its sectional convictions.

It was one of the paradoxes of the campaign that while the South was thus fulminating against the "Black Republicans" for their hostility to slavery, the Abolitionists were assailing them for their tolerance of the institution. William Lloyd Garrison abused the Republican organization as feeble and indefinite, and sneered at the leaders for reassuring men of moderate views in order to poll a large vote at the election. An abolitionist ticket was placed in the field, with Gerrit Smith as its candidate, and its mouthpiece, the *Radical Abolitionist* attacked Frémont in every issue as a leader who would compromise with a great evil.

As the campaign drew toward its close, Frémont continued to play a role of dignified aloofness. He greeted the curious and for the most part friendly crowds of people who came to his Ninth Street home, made brief and perfunctory speeches to various delegations, and carried on a wide correspondence. He maintained his health by fencing every morning and taking long walks after dark, while in the middle of October he made a brief run into Vermont. The actual management of the campaign was in the hands of E. D. Morgan, Francis P. Blair, John Bigelow, Isaac Sherman (who took New York for his special province), Charles James, and Thurlow Weed, men in whom

Irving Stone

Frémont had full confidence. Bigelow, James, and Sherman made up a private committee which, together with Mrs. Frémont, handled the mail.

The most painful aspect of the campaign was the growing intensity of the personal and sectional animosity which accompanied it. A fair illustration of the vituperation which Southerners of the Rhett and Brooks type poured forth is furnished by a speech of Henry A. Wise in Richmond:

Frémont is nothing. (Cheers.) He is less than nothing in my estimation. (Enthusiastic cheering.) He is but a mere personification of Black Republicanism, the bearer of the black flag. (Cheers.) The question will not be, shall Frémont reign over you and me? but it will be, shall the black flag be erected, shall the higher law be executed by the President of the United States over the reign of the Constitution and the laws? Shall property be invaded with impunity? Yes, you will find hundreds that will say—they begin already to say—“O, wait, wait for some overt act!—wait for him to do some wrong!” Tell me, will any person entertaining feeling of self-respect, having the spirit and courage of a man, wait to prepare for war while its cloud is on the horizon until after the declaration of war is made?

Tell me, if the hoisting of the Black Republican flag in the hands of an adventurer, born illegitimately in a neighboring State, if not ill-begotten in this very city—tell me, if the hoisting of the black flag over you by a Frenchman’s bastard, while the arms of civil war are already clashing, is not to be deemed an overt act and declaration of war?

One southern friend and relative after another, both of Frémont and his wife, now renounced them forever. From a former comrade, later a distinguished soldier and historian—Edward McCrady—with whom Frémont had grown up in Charleston, and for whom he had named a stream in the Far West, he received a note in explanation of the unauthorized publication of a private letter; and McCrady closed thus:

Mrs. Johnson and myself keenly feel the gross outrage committed upon us, by this most unwarranted reference to our private correspondence. After your course in reference to the Presidential election, any correspondence with you is painful to me, and nothing but the necessity of

The Campaign of 1856

vindicating myself and family from a suspicion of such gross indelicacy as is implied in that reference, could have induced me again to address you.

The chief compensating feature of the campaign was the enthusiasm with which the youth, the womanhood, the clergy, the cultural and intellectual leaders of the North, united in what seemed to them a great moral crusade. The universities, with such spokesmen as Felton of Harvard and Silliman of Yale, were almost unanimously for Frémont. The literary leaders of New England and New York had actively espoused his candidacy—Emerson, Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Bayard Taylor, and even the venerable Washington Irving. One of George W. Curtis's campaign utterances, a felicitous address to the students of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, at once became a classic of American politics—“The Duty of the American Scholar.” The religious press rallied under the leadership of Henry Ward Beecher, whose pen in the pages of the *Independent* was only less effective than Greeley's in the *Tribune*. On the Sunday preceding the election, most of the New England ministers preached and prayed for the defeat of Buchanan, and the pulpits of the Middle West poured forth a thousand pleas for the Republican cause.

The critical event of the early autumn was Pennsylvania's state election of October 14th, which was universally expected to show how her twenty-seven electoral votes would be cast. Both sides girded up their loins. Two state parties were in the field, one the Democratic and the other the Union, the latter supposedly comprising the Republicans, Whigs, and Native Americans. At the beginning of the battle, all Republican strategists had pointed to Pennsylvania as the crucial ground and urged that money be poured into it. Unfortunately, the party was straitened for funds, while its state organization was weak and defective. It was said later that the Democrats had spent nearly \$500,000 in Pennsylvania, and it is certain that John W. Forney and others came to New York, demanded large sums from merchants in the southern trade, and used the funds to subsidize not merely the Democratic but also the Native American party. August Belmont was reported to have given \$50,000 and other Wall

Irving Stone

Street bankers and brokers \$100,000 more. The Republicans loudly lamented their poverty. "When Frémont was nominated," Russell Errett wrote reproachfully from Pittsburgh to Salmon P. Chase, "our friends in New York, and Ohio, and everywhere, assured us that we could and should have whatever aid we needed, both in money and speakers, to carry the State; yet, so far . . . we have failed to get either." "We Frémonters of this town," Greeley wrote from New York, "have not one dollar where the Fillmoreans and Buchanans have ten each, and we have Pennsylvania and New Jersey both on our shoulders. Each State is utterly miserable, so far as money is concerned."

The Republicans placed a brigade of speakers in the field in the closing days of the fight, Charles A. Dana writing jubilantly, "I suppose there are about two hundred orators, great and small, now stumping Pennsylvania for Frémont"; but they included few men of national renown. The ablest campaigners were Robert Collyer, the great-hearted Yorkshire workingman and minister, whose rugged eloquence went straight to the hearts of the laborers, David Wilmot, and Hannibal Hamlin. State affection for Buchanan, as a favorite son, counted for a great deal; the Republican press, outside of Philadelphia, counted for little. Moreover, the Union leadership was weak and divided. Simon Cameron wrote Thurlow Weed later: "From the first I saw little hopes of Pennsylvania. I saw the error committed in placing the movement in the hands of ignorant and conceited men. The Whigs of this State cannot control a campaign; and they would not permit Democrats to advise or help them." But perhaps the decisive factor was the fear of the conservative, peace-loving "Pennsylvania Dutch" that Frémont's election would produce a costly upheaval, and their consequent decision to cling to the older parties.

Election day in Pennsylvania dawned with party feeling so intense that sober men were glad to find the weather raw and drizzling, for they feared a clash of turbulent crowds. The streets of Philadelphia that night were jammed with people eager to hear the news. Two days elapsed before it was certain that the Buchanan state ticket was elected, and a still longer period before it was known that its ma-

The Campaign of 1856

jority fell short of 3,000. A change of 1,500 votes would have given Frémont's Union party the victory. Yet this close result was decisive; it was at once seen that if the free-soil forces, uniting Whigs, Know-Nothings, and Republicans under one banner, could not carry Pennsylvania, the Republicans single-handed could not do so. The same day also witnessed elections in Ohio and Indiana, and although Ohio went Republican, Indiana proved safely Democratic. Buchanan's election thus seemed doubly sure. Young Rutherford B. Hayes expressed the opinion of a host of Republicans. "Before the October elections in Pennsylvania and Indiana," he wrote, "I was confident Colonel Frémont would be elected. But the disastrous results in those states indicate and will probably do much to produce his defeat. The majorities are small—very small—but they discourage our side."

More than a fortnight before the final election, therefore, Republican leaders knew that they were virtually beaten. They still affected to look forward confidently to the result, but their hopes were gone. To the end of his life, Frémont believed that if his wishes had been followed in the selection of Simon Cameron as running mate, and an organization developed in Pennsylvania sufficient to prevent Democratic corruption of the voters, he would have carried the state in both October and November, and the resulting prestige of the Republicans would have swept Indiana or Illinois into line. This is doubtful, for even had Frémont won the state election, Buchanan's chances for carrying Pennsylvania in November would have remained good; the Whig supporters of Fillmore, who in Philadelphia outnumbered the Republicans three to one, would have voted almost *en masse* against Frémont. But it is interesting to note that Cameron believed that if he and Thurlow Weed had been able to organize the state fully in July, victory would have been certain.

The complete returns were just what the shrewder politicians expected. Of the thirty-one states, Buchanan carried nineteen, Frémont eleven, and Fillmore one; Buchanan had 174 electoral votes, Frémont 114, and Fillmore 8. No fewer than 1,341,264 votes were polled by Frémont, about a half-million fewer than those received by Buchanan, and about a half-million more than those cast for

Irving Stone

Fillmore. New York was safely in the Frémont column, for his vote outside of the Democratic metropolis was prodigious; so were Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The principal disappointments, aside from Pennsylvania, were Illinois and Indiana. A broad view of the election showed that the Republicans had been beaten by the Whig votes cast for Buchanan and Fillmore. Fillmore alone received the support of almost 900,000 Whigs and Native Americans, a third of them in the North; they were cast against a sectional party and to avert the threat of civil war, and not against Frémont.

Frémont took his defeat philosophically, and Mrs. Frémont accepted it with surprising restraint of emotion. They had spent election night at headquarters, and then returned at dawn with old Francis P. Blair to their home for breakfast. When they spoke of the Missouri result Jessie remarked brightly: "Colonel Benton, I perceive, has the best of the family argument." Frémont smiled, but Blair's voice choked and tears rolled down his cheeks as he declared: "Tom Benton's stubborn stand cost us many a vote outside Missouri." At this Lilly, who had set her heart on the White House as a delightful place of residence, broke into loud weeping. Jessie forthwith sent her for a long walk, and as she rebuked the little girl Blair blew his nose and said contritely: "That will do for me too, Jessie Anne. Come, Colonel, let's go to headquarters."

As they looked about after election day, the Republicans had much with which to console themselves. The Whig Party was dead; it was now evident that Millard Fillmore's campaign represented its expiring throes, and that it would never again figure in a presidential campaign. Such northern Democrats as President Pierce, Lewis Cass, and John A. Dix, detested by many free-soilers because of their complaisance toward slavery, had been stinging rebuked by their states; so had such New England Whigs as Choate and Caleb Cushing. In the brief space of six months the Republican party had succeeded in crystallizing public sentiment throughout the North and establishing itself in that section as the dominant party. The *Tribune* rejoiced that the future success of the Republicans seemed certain, the *Herald* proposed that Frémont should be at once renominated

The Campaign of 1856

for the campaign of 1860, and, in the *Evening Post*, Bryant proclaimed that the tide was becoming irresistible:

In those States of the Union which have now given such large majorities for Frémont, public opinion, which till lately has been shuffling and undecided in regard to the slavery question, is now clear, fixed, and resolute. If we look back to 1848, when we conducted a Presidential election on this very ground of opposition to the spread of slavery, we shall see that we have made immense strides towards the ascendancy which, if there be any grounds to hope for the perpetuity of free institutions, is yet to be ours. We were then comparatively weak, we are now strong; we then counted our thousands, we now count our millions; we could then point to our respectable minorities in a few States, we now point to State after State . . . The cause is not going back—it is going rapidly forward; the Free Soil party of 1848 is the nucleus of the Republican party of 1856; but with what accessions of numbers, of moral power, of influence, not merely in public assemblies, but at the domestic fireside!

For Frémont himself the outlook was of less roseate character. True, he had borne himself through a heated and abusive campaign with notable dignity and poise, and had emerged from it with no lessening of public esteem. The Republican party would have pursued a more courageous course had it nominated some veteran of the free-soil struggle, some man of greater public experience. But parties have to think of expediency; and the Republicans owed Frémont a good deal, for his gallant record and attractive personality had served them well in their first national campaign. Neither Chase nor McLean would have obtained more votes, and Seward would probably have polled fewer. At the same time, his political career was now plainly ended. He had neither the gifts nor training that a politician needs; he had failed to make any public utterances that impressed the country with his intellectual powers or force of character. He must turn back to private life—to the vexatious business affairs he had dropped the previous fall.

Historians of the period, almost without exception, have declared it fortunate that Frémont was not elected and that the United States did not have to face the possible ordeal of civil war under a head so

Irving Stone

inexperienced, so rash and impetuous, so brilliantly erratic. Assuming that secession would have followed a Republican victory, they are unquestionably right. At no stage of his career did Frémont exhibit the qualities indispensable to the head of a nation racked by civil strife; he held in reserve none of these powers which Lincoln, coming to Washington in 1861 and seeming to many easterners totally incapable of meeting the crisis, possessed. Had there been no secession, Frémont might have made a far better President than Buchanan. He would have shown none of the feeble pliancy of that Executive, and while doing his best to conciliate the South, would have capitulated to it in no essential point. Frémont always believed that, had he been elected, the influence of his and Mrs. Frémont's large family connections in the South, and of Benton's name, would have done much to prevent for all time a resort to arms. During the campaign he had given attention to a plan, one which later commended itself to Lincoln, for the gradual abolition of slavery with Federal compensation, and had spent some time with Jeremiah S. Black, the able Pennsylvanian who became Attorney-General and Secretary of State under Buchanan, in discussing its details. But the danger of secession was too real to be trifled with. It was well for the country that Frémont was not placed in the White House.

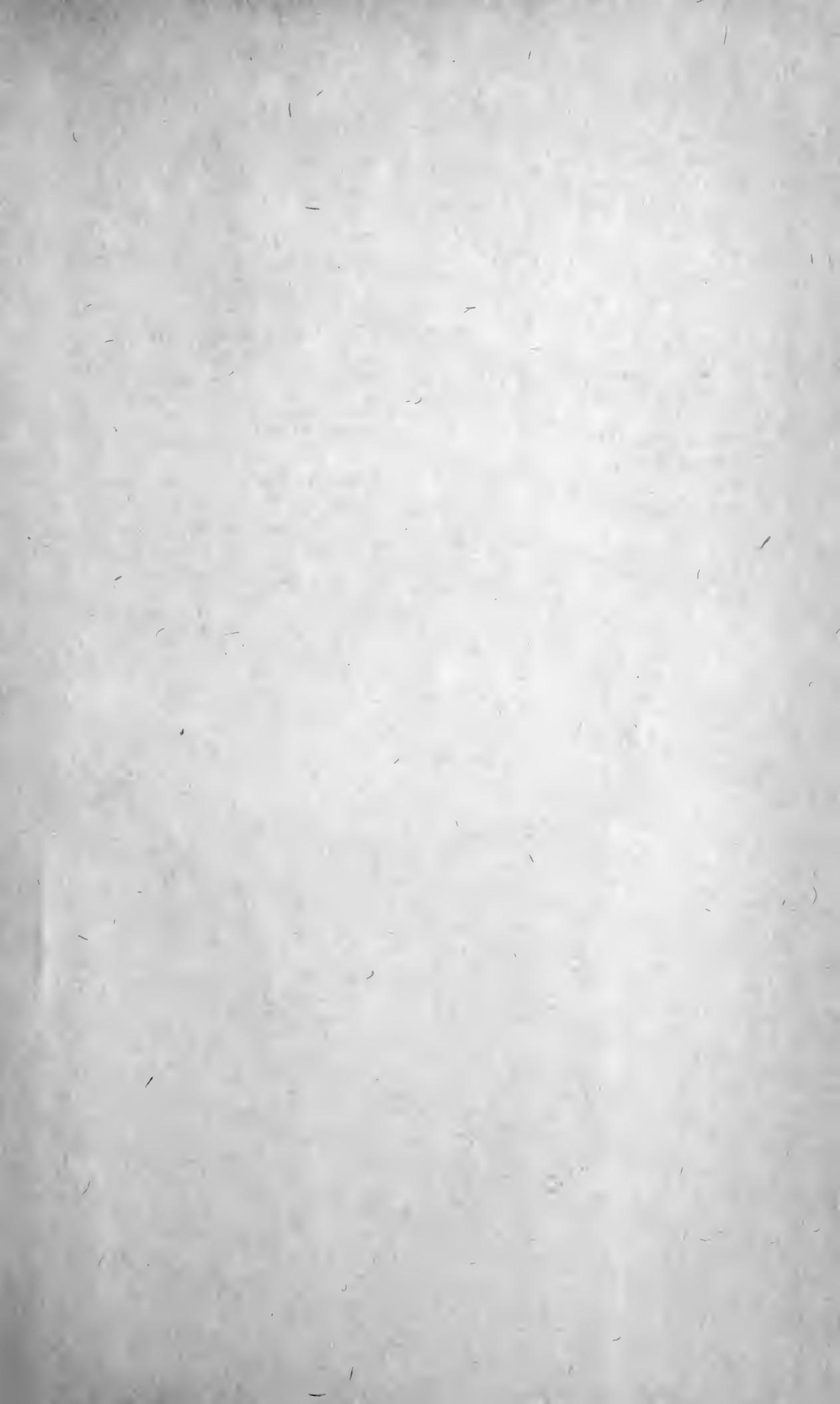
Index

OF TITLES, AUTHORS AND CO-EDITORS

- Aiken, Conrad, 39
Anderson, Sherwood, 74, 214
Anthem of Earth, An, 39
- Ballad of the Sad Café, The, 300
Benchley, Robert, 270
Benét, Stephen Vincent, 136
Boy Comes to Boston, A, 51
Boyle, Kay, 300
Bromfield, Louis, 97
Burns, Robert, 293
Butch Minds the Baby, 389
- Callaghan, Morley, 74
Campaign of 1856, The, 403
Canby, Henry Seidel, 177
Cather, Willa, 129
Comfort, Alex, 85
Conrad, Joseph, 28
Cotter's Saturday Night, The, 293
Cuppy, Will, 270
- Day of Peace, A, 106
Day the Dam Broke, The, 97
Dos Passos, John, 368
- Early Days of a Woman, 254
Edman, Irwin, 239
End of the Voyage, The, 28
- Farewell, My Lovely!, 168
Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses, 60
Fishback, Margaret, 104
Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, 85
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 368
Forbes, Esther, 51, 106
- Fox of Peapack, The, 24
Free Joe and the Rest of the World, 154
- Gibbs, Wolcott, 278
Glamour, 136
Good Old-fashioned Christmas, A, 270
- Harris, Joel Chandler, 154
Hoffenstein, Samuel, 365
Hound of Heaven, The, 193
- I Paint What I see, 365
I Want to Know Why, 74
Isaiah, 213
- James, Marquis, 51
Journalism in Tennessee, 286
- Katie Wins a Home, 1
Kipling, Rudyard, 129, 232
- La Virginie, 85
Lardner, Ring, 1
Luce, Clare Boothe, 193
- Mary Gloster, The, 129
McAndrew's Hymn, 232
McCullers, Carson, 300
McFee, William, 232
Morley, Christopher, 28
- Nash, Ogden, 24
Nathan, Robert, 136
Natura in Urbe, 104
Nevins, Allan, 154, 403
Normal Madness, 239

Index

- O'Brien, Flann, 199
O'Hara, John, 278
One Is a Wanderer, 381
Over the River and Through the Wood,
 278
- Passages on Social Justice, 211
Pegler, Westbrook, 381
Perelman, S. J., 1
Phillips, H. I., 389
Picture of a Party, 368
Pooka and the Good Fairy, The, 199
- Return, The, 214
Roberts, Kenneth, 60
Runyon, Damon, 389
Ruskin, John, 211
- Santayana, George, 239
Saroyan, William, 199
- Sinclair, Upton, 211
Smith, H. Allen, 286
Steele, Wilbur Daniel, 214
Stein, Gertrude, 254
Stone, Irving, 403
Stuart, Jesse, 293
Strout, Richard Lee, 168
- Thompson, Francis, 39, 193
Thoreau, Henry D., 177
Thurber, James, 97, 168, 381
Tolstoy, Leo, 106
Twain, Mark, 60, 286
- White, E. B., 24, 104, 168, 365
White, Lee Strout, 168
Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,
 177
Wright, Richard, 254



Date Due

808.8
W994.
C. E.

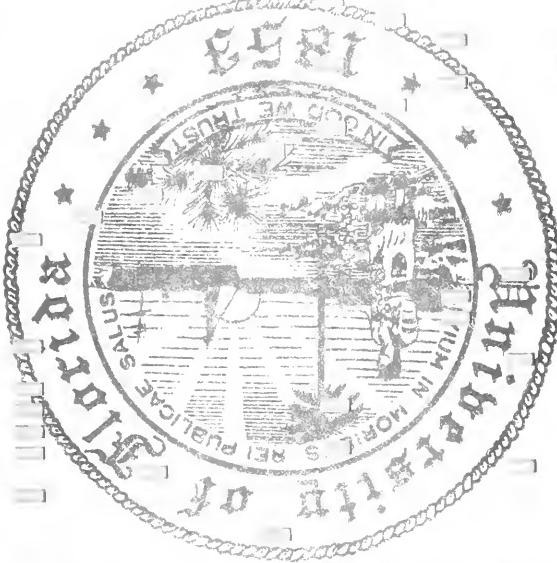
I wish I'd written that; main
808.8W894i C.3



— THE HISTORY OF TUDOR



1262 03191 0424



TO BOOK POCKET

2) REI UHII GUARD

Date Due

